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WAR IS STILL HELL

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Congress and the President got it right when they called for every classroom to have a "highly qualified" teacher within a few years. There are no silver bullets to create better schools but there is a very simple research-proven truth — the best thing we can do to help every student succeed is to provide good teachers, well versed in subject matter content and in how to teach it.

Teachers need and want help to do their jobs well. Good training in college is important but it is not enough, and many teachers are long removed from a university setting. Teachers want the kind of professional development that will give them the knowledge and skills to help their students meet these new academic standards. They want good diagnostic information that allows them to be better at adjusting their teaching for individual students.

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For decades, ETS has worked with classroom teachers to understand what teachers need and to develop products that can help them be more effective. Teachers have taught us a great deal. They have a very tough job, one that is the basis of our democracy. We will only succeed collectively if they succeed. America depends on its teachers.

Every state is wrestling with how to meet the achievement goals of *No Child Left Behind*. And, unfortunately, every state is facing significant budget problems resulting in pressure to cut education budgets. As hard as it will be, this is a time to increase our investment in the professional development of the teaching force. It is one investment that we can be sure will pay the dividends we all need.

To make sure that we leave no child behind, we must also make sure that no teacher is left behind. Providing high quality professional development, adequately funded and well managed, is absolutely required to reach the goals we all share.

We invite you to continue this dialogue by sharing your thoughts and questions at www.ets.org/testing or by mail.

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CORRESPONDENCE

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

REGARDING CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER'S piece "Self Service," I would suggest two influences as the sources for the liberal unwillingness to use power for American self-interest (March 3). One is the surprisingly long-lived influence in liberal circles of Stalinist ideas regarding American malevolence, beginning with the Communist front groups of the 1930s and their co-option of many liberal causes, continuing through the argument over the Vietnam War, which still colors the foreign policy debate today.

The other has been the predominance of the realist school of foreign policy, where national self-interest is defined in the narrowest terms. American liberals have been made suspicious by the use of American power to support dictatorships, the tragic unintended consequences of which have included the reluctance of many peoples around the world to trust our commitment to democracy abroad.

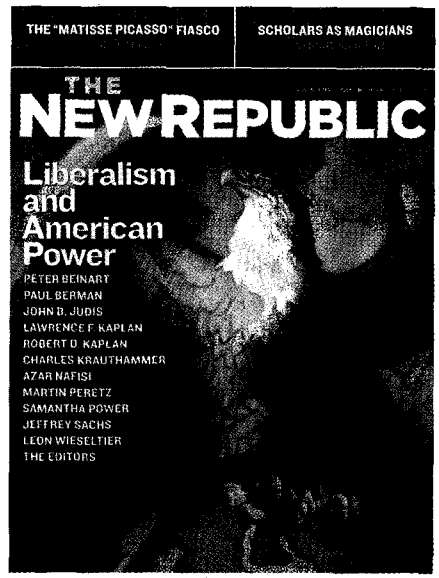
The idealist school, which is currently crafting foreign policy, is not really conservative. Indeed, many are only accidental Republicans, products of the Scoop Jackson wing of the Democratic Party, having left to become Reagan staffers only when the McGovernite takeover proved discouragingly irreversible. They were originally ideological heirs of the anti-communist wing of the labor movement and the Democratic left.

Traditionally, it was not conservatives, the bulk of whom were either realists or isolationists, who espoused American interests. The idealists now framing foreign policy are anything but conservative. Hopefully, their policies will succeed in furthering both American ideals and self-interest and, in doing so, will help to banish the knee-jerk mistrust of American motives both at home and abroad.

ELLEN F. HEYMAN, PH.D.
Springfield, Virginia

BODY GUARD

JEFFREY ROSEN CONTENDS THAT *Roe* v. *Wade* is not imperiled and that, if it were to be overturned, the nation would be better off ("Worst Choice," February 24). He's wrong on both counts. *Roe* is in jeopardy. Three justices have long argued for its overturn, and Justice Anthony Kennedy is on record as supporting the



elimination of protections for women's health and authorizing states to ban safe, common pre-viability abortion procedures. Presidents on average nominate 2.5 justices, and President Bush has pledged to nominate justices whose views accord with those of Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Thus, with just one more anti-choice justice, the right to choose could be drastically limited.

Rosen's political calculation that Bush would be unlikely to nominate anti-choice justices is at odds with Bush's record of lower-court appointments and other actions on reproductive rights. Bush has yet to nominate a court of appeals judge who evinces support for *Roe*. He has used his executive powers to legally protect stem cells, embryos, and fetuses; to appoint a cadre of anti-choice officials throughout the government; and even to shackle family-planning programs around the world. He is laying the groundwork to argue that *Roe* was wrongly decided to a receptive judiciary. Meanwhile, he is urging Congress to enact federal restrictions on the right to choose. Rosen predicts an about-face when Bush gets to nominate a Supreme Court justice; we believe the better predictor of what Bush will do is what he has done.

The nation emphatically would not be better off if constitutional protection for a woman's right to choose were eliminated. The right to choose is a fundamental freedom, central to women's lives, autonomy, and equality. This country does not submit fundamental freedoms to state-by-state, year-by-year, legislature-by-legislature votes. Just as religious freedoms and free speech are constitutionally secured nationwide, a woman's right to make personal and private decisions about reproduction should not depend on the current temper of her state legislators.

The federal judiciary's role would be impoverished if it could not guarantee critical individual rights such as the right to choose. Federal courts sit to protect such freedoms from the vagaries of legislatures hostile to such rights. Furthermore, it is cynical in the extreme to assert, as Rosen does, that the pro-choice movement would be better off if we had to fight criminal bans on abortion year after year across the country. It has been challenging and diversionary to the movement to have had to fight the 335 anti-choice measures that have been enacted since 1995; it would be catastrophic to have to fight to keep women out of jail and the back alley each legislative session.

Rosen disputes NARAL Pro-Choice America's estimate that twelve states would likely ban abortion in all or most circumstances if *Roe* is overturned, preferring the lower estimates of Republicans for Choice, scattered political scientists, and Republican consultants who doubt that the public would support such draconian bans. Our finding, from *Who Decides? A*

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State-by-State Review of Abortion and Reproductive Rights, is based upon a careful and methodical state-by-state examination of the public positions of governors and each state legislative body. Unlike Rosen and the pundits he relies upon, we do not speculate that politicians will moderate their views when they have the power actually to strip women of their rights. Hard-line, anti-choice incumbents cannot be depended upon to pull back just as they are about to realize their stated goals.

The future of a woman's right to choose faces not only legal and political threats. The right to choose is particularly vulnerable because broad swaths of the pro-choice public are unaware of its fragility.

KATE MICHELMAN
President
NARAL Pro-Choice America
Washington, D.C.

ROSEN MISUNDERSTANDS PREGnancy, fetal development, and the campaign to ban so-called "partial-birth abortion"; misrepresents the significance of Justice Kennedy's dissent in *Stenberg* v. *Carhart;* and demonstrates a spectacular disregard for the suffering of individual women.

First, Rosen describes "partial-birth abortion" as a procedure performed in the third trimester. On this point, Rosen has swallowed anti-abortion advocates' spin hook, line, and sinker. In fact, the term was invented in 1995 out of whole cloth by anti-abortion advocates and is a political label, not a particular procedure; it has been defined in more than nine different ways in more than 30 federal and state statutes. While bill sponsors and President Bush alike imply that "partial-birth abortion" is a procedure that is performed after viability, no fewer than 50 federal and state court judges, appointed by Democrats and Republicans alike, including five justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, say otherwise. These judges have recognized that "partial-birth abortion" is not a medical term and has been defined so broadly as to cover the safest and most common methods of abortion used, starting in the early second trimester, long before viability. The latest version of this abortion ban, currently pending in Congress, is no different.

Second, Rosen states that a majority of Americans agree that "late" abortions, defined by him as those taking place in the "second trimester," should be illegal, and he asserts that the second trimester is "when the fetus becomes viable." However, the second trimester is generally considered to run from the fourteenth week of pregnancy until the twenty-sixth week, and viability does not occur until the very end of the second trimester or the beginning of the third trimester, around 24 to 28 weeks of pregnancy. Moreover, the same poll cited by Rosen also indicates that the majority of Americans still think *Roe* was a good thing for the country and that abortions should be available when a woman's health is endangered, as well as in cases of fetal anomaly.

Third, Rosen is wrong when he claims "*Roe* is not hanging by a thread" and when he downplays the importance of Justice Kennedy's dissent in *Carhart.* The point on which Justice Kennedy dissented in that case, and the reason his opinion has caused such alarm among supporters of the right to choose abortion, was the Court's reaffirmation of a woman's right to obtain abortions in a way that preserves her health. Under Kennedy's reasoning, a state would be able to legislate the way in which the physician performs the abortion, without regard to the

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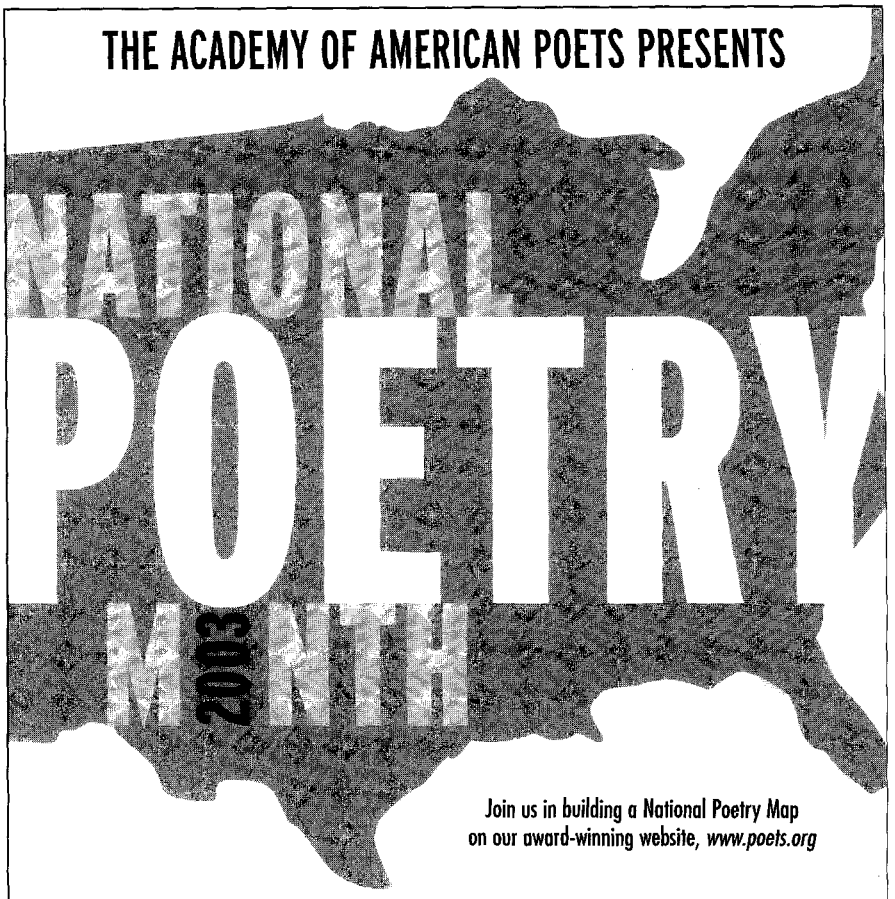
THE ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS PRESENTS



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Counting Heads

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

IT'S DANGEROUS TO GENERALIZE about this war. America's attack on Iraq is moving so fast that basic assumptions about its course can flip in the course of one day. But, as of this writing, the war's conduct suggests at least one irony: This supposedly cold-blooded administration is making a remarkable, some might even say militarily dangerous, effort to spare Iraqi lives. Conservatives once attacked Bill Clinton for being too squeamish about civilian casualties. But compared with George W. Bush—at least so far—Clinton didn't even come close.

The right has long attacked the left as insufficiently concerned with national interest. Liberals, the argument goes, only support humanitarian wars untainted by America's need for security. But, if the rationale for this war is U.S. security, you'd hardly know it from listening to the Bush administration over the last few days. Consider the attack's name: "Operation Iraqi Freedom." The campaign to topple the Taliban, you'll remember, was dubbed "Operation Enduring Freedom." But that referred to *American* freedom, attacked on September 11, 2001. For this war, the military reportedly favored "Operation Desert Freedom," which would have harkened back to "Desert Storm." But Bush administration civilians evidently considered that too morally vague (after all, we weren't freeing the desert) and thus settled on a name that could have been cooked up by Human Rights Watch. As one writer on *National Review Online* recently joked, "Whatever happened to all those in-your-face, aggressive names for military ops—the ones with words like 'storm,' 'sword,' 'lightning,' and so on?"

In fact, the Bush administration hasn't only vowed not to make this a war against the Iraqi people; it has practically promised not to make it a war against the Iraqi military either. In his March 17 speech giving Saddam Hussein a 48-hour ultimatum, President Bush said, "It is not too late for the Iraqi military to act with honor and protect your country by permitting the peaceful entry of coalition forces" and urged "every member of the Iraqi military and intelligence services, if war comes, do not fight for a dying regime." In the months leading up to the war, the United States dropped millions of leaflets urging Iraqi soldiers to surrender and be spared. And Pentagon officials have talked openly about their desire to negotiate with Iraqi generals rather than destroy them. The clear implication is that the United States considers most of the Iraqi military a victim of Saddam's government rather than a manifestation of it.

The Bush administration's extremely narrow definition of the enemy has guided the war's conduct as well as its rhetoric. First, there was the decision to scramble war plans by going for an early knockout punch on Saddam's bunker. Sticklers for international law muttered that the Bushies were circumventing traditional prohibitions on assassinating another country's leader. But, viewed more broadly, the effort to get Saddam and sons was clearly a humanitarian decision—an attempt to spare virtually all Iraqis from conflict.

In less obvious ways, that logic continued to guide the entire first week of the war. In 1991, the United States bombed Iraq for 38 days before beginning its ground offensive; this time it bombed for one day. And the Pentagon avoided strikes against Baghdad's electrical grid, water system, bridges, and power plants in order to reduce civilian suffering. That decision has so far limited Iraqi casualties. But the decision to send U.S. Marines and infantrymen into Iraq before "preparing the battlefield" with extended air attacks also exposed American troops to greater danger. According to National Public Radio, American commanders even ordered helicopters to fly low over tanks, minimizing the chances of collateral damage but exposing them to Iraqi ground fire. In Kosovo, some liberal humanitarians charged that the Clinton administration's obsession with preventing U.S. combat deaths—it ruled out a ground war and instructed pilots to fly so high that they were impervious to Serb anti-aircraft fire—led to higher Serb and Kosovar civilian casualties. Today, the supposedly ruthless Bush administration has reversed the moral calculus. Some American troops will probably die because some Iraqis were spared.

This moral calculus has also shaped the Bush administration's decision to send ground troops straight to the Iraqi capital. The American forces surging toward Baghdad bypassed as many Iraqi units as possible and operated under orders to fire only when fired upon. Critics charge that, by not destroying Iraqi troops, the United States left its lightly armed logistical "tail" vulnerable to the kind of counterattack suffered by the 507th Maintenance Company on March 24. As Peter Feaver, director of Duke University's Triangle Institute for Security Studies, told *The Washington Post*'s Thomas Ricks this week, "The really important thing about the [U.S. war] plan is that it has put mission accomplishment ahead of force protection." And that mission isn't only to take Baghdad; it's to minimize the killing of Iraqis along the way.

In the north, too, the Bush administration has shown surprising humanitarianism. For weeks now, cynics have assumed the United States would prioritize its strategic alliance with Turkey over its moral commitment to the Kurds and let Ankara send its troops into northern Iraq, thus sparking a humanitarian catastrophe and snuffing out hopes of Kurdish autonomy in a post-Saddam Iraq. But, ever since Ankara's refusal to allow American troops to operate from Turkish soil, the Bush administration has been surprisingly outspoken on the Kurds' behalf. America's refusal to bless Ankara's incursion led Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week to delay by a crucial 24 hours the opening of Turkey's airspace to U.S. warplanes. On Sunday, President Bush said, "We're making it very clear that we expect [Turkey] not to come into northern Iraq." The Bush administration even seems to have implied that large-scale Turkish intervention will threaten U.S. foreign aid. It is too early to tell whether the Bush administration's efforts to prevent Turkey from crushing Kurdish aspirations will succeed, but, so far, the United States has made a much greater effort than most commentators expected.

Does all this make the Bush team pure? Of course not. But it does suggest that they recognize that this war's grand moral aims—to implant democracy in the Middle East—must guide its means as well. The imperviousness to public opinion and the hypocrisy about human rights that have at times blemished this administration have so far been blessedly absent from its war in Iraq. That could all change in a heartbeat, of course. But, if it doesn't, there is at least some hope that the United States may actually win this terrifying war, not only militarily, but politically as well.

PETER BEINART

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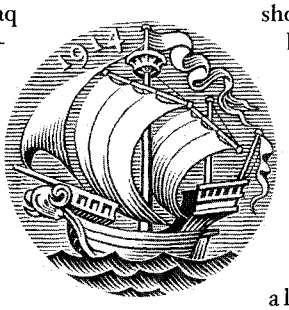
Pictures

WAR IS STILL HELL. That has been the sobering lesson of the week, and it is a measure of the mental unpreparedness of the United States for war that the brutality of this war is surprising many Americans. The happy talk is not standing us in good stead. The uplift feels hollow. Americans have been killed, and taken prisoner, and probably executed, and we are shocked. We are not even sure that we want to see the pictures of what the enemy did to our soldiers. We are delicate, and queasy, and disappointed that the battlefield brings bad news. In a culture of good news, bad news is bad form. We are also hypocritical: We do not offer objections to the pictures of what our soldiers do to the enemy. We watch the bright explosions in Baghdad undiscomfited. In its targeting, Operation Iraqi Freedom may be the most ethically scrupulous air campaign in history; but there must be no doubt that we are killing civilians, despite our precise intentions and our precise weapons. War is still hell.

The dejection that has settled over many Americans as the war in Iraq begins to look like a war was to be expected. We were set up for this slump by the media, which inanely depicted the early days of the war as an Arabian adventure. The technology of journalism has been as hallowed in this conflict as the technology of warfare. Video cameras, compact satellite dishes, videophones, digital cameras, laptop computers, satellite phones: The abolition of time and place is almost complete. (The president of MSNBC told *USA Today* that the difference between the coverage of the first Gulf war and the coverage of the second Gulf war is "the difference between Atari and PlayStation.") The diffusion of wartime imagery has never been so swift or so wide. Reality has never before seemed so thoroughly transmitted.

The manner of its transmission has left it seeming a little unreal: With all these screaming graphics and booming soundtracks, one half-expects Vin Diesel to turn up among the embedded. But the problem is not that television has reduced the war to a spectacle; at this late date in the history of electronic spectatorship, most Americans can see past the packaging of the image to the image itself and be in different ways moved. The problem is that television has made the war into a big thrill. There was something grotesque about the exhilaration of the media in the first days of the war. The excitement of the reporters who crossed into Iraq with the American forces already looks ridiculous. No doubt about it, they were enjoying themselves in the race through the desert. Have they ever been more important in their own eyes? Whether or not Americans were titillated by what they saw on television, the media were titillated by what they put on television.



But the race in the desert came to an end, and cruelties were visited on American troops, and the gravity of history reasserted itself, and the battle for Baghdad was begun. The thrill is gone. And the stimulations of the media have left many Americans poorly equipped for exposure to the actuality of the conflict. The debate about Al Jazeera's display of the executed American soldiers is an indication of our unreadiness for what is taking place. Why should Americans be spared this knowledge? What illusion, exactly, is being protected? The feelings of the families of these victims certainly count for something, but the suppression of these pictures is still a suppression of the truth. The atrocious images will anyway be interpreted in many ways: They will make some Americans hate the war, and they will make other Americans hate the enemy. But surely they are essential for a proper understanding of the circumstances of, and the reasons for, this struggle. (Nothing made the culture of Al Qaeda more plain than the tape of the execution of Daniel Pearl, which was similarly suppressed. It was not a snuff film; it was a political commercial.)

Just wars are also ugly wars. Fancy wars are also ugly wars. All the moral assurances and all the technological assurances in the world will not make this war any lovelier to behold, especially if Saddam Hussein orders the use of chemical weapons against American troops. Will those pictures be suppressed, too? Perhaps the secretary of defense should lose a little of his bravado, so that Americans are not confused into believing that the rightness of this war is somehow connected to the ease with which it may be won. It may not be won quite so easily. Perhaps the president should speak a little more of American sacrifice, for American sacrifice is upon us. Perhaps the media should tear their eyes away from themselves and lower their voices, because they are interfering with the lucidity of the American people. "This is early in the game," Aaron Brown knowingly remarked the other night. And then he properly, and culpably, added that "it's no game out there." ■

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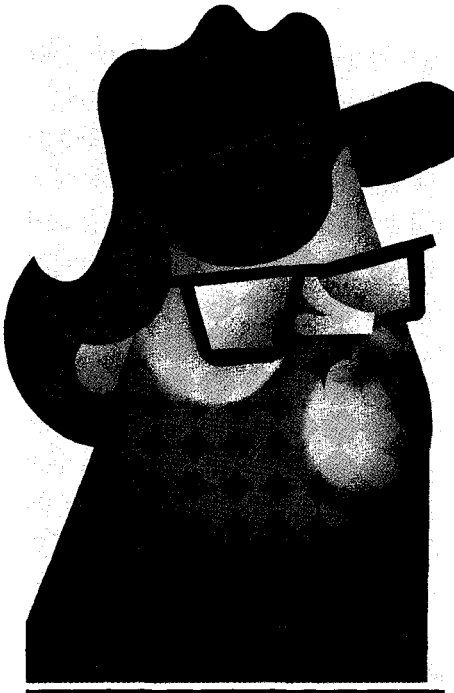
NOTEBOOK

MOORE'S FICTIONS . . . BUSH'S OVERCONFIDENCE . . . MOYNIHAN'S FAREWELL

DISHONEST WHITE MAN

WHEN *BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE* director Michael Moore ambled up to the Kodak Theatre stage on Sunday night to accept the Academy Award for best documentary, he invited his fellow nominees to join him. "They are here in solidarity with me because we like nonfiction," Moore explained, "and we live in fictitious times. We live in a time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons, whether it's the fictition [sic] of duct tape or the fictitious [sic] of orange alerts."

Moore, in fact, knows a great deal about fictition: His award-winning documentary about America's culture of guns and violence was riddled with errors and misrepresentations. Let's begin with the movie's title, inspired, Moore suggests, by the fact that the two high school students who perpetrated the atrocity at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, had gone to a bowling class at six o'clock in the morning on the day of the massacre. Only they didn't. As Daniel Lyons noted in *Forbes*, police in Colorado say the two students skipped the bowling class the day of their rampage. Lyons also pointed out that Moore's suggestion in the movie that the two students might have been driven to murder because of the "weapons of mass destruction" made in a Lockheed Martin assembly plant located in Littleton—a suggestion accompanied by clips of giant rockets—is rather dubious given that the plant in question actually makes space-launch vehicles for TV satellites. And Lyons discovered that Moore's claim in the film that the North Country Bank & Trust in Traverse City, Michigan, offered a deal in which "if you opened an account, the bank would give you a gun" is false. The scene in the film that shows Moore walking into the bank and then walking out with a gun is apparently staged; to get a gun from the bank, a customer must buy a long-term CD and then go to a gun shop to pick up the weapon after a background check. Nor was Forbes alone in truth-squadding the film. Other errors, omissions, and distortions have been cited by *spinsanity.com* and a number of Canadian publications.



Michael Moore

At the Oscars, Moore ended his little speech by whining, "We are against this war, Mr. Bush. Shame on you, Mr. Bush, shame on you." No: Shame on Moore for playing fast and loose with the facts; and shame on the Academy for rewarding it.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

LAST WEEK IN THIS SPACE, WE noted that the Bush administration had employed its oft-used "inevitability strategy"—i.e., repeatedly assert something is true until it becomes so—in its effort to persuade a Security Council majority to back action against Iraq. But, no matter how many times administration officials predicted in the press that wavering nations would imminently side with the United States, the hoped-for votes never materialized.

In the first days of the war itself, the Bush team seemed to be at it again. To be sure, there was arguably a sound psychological-warfare rationale behind the administration's early, optimistic pronouncements: The more imminent and inevitable the Baathists believed Saddam Hussein's overthrow to be, the more likely they would be to surrender. Still, much of the early second-guessing of the war's progress and panic about a possible quagmire in Mesopotamia was encouraged by the overconfidence projected by the administration leading up to the war and in its early days. This was made comically clear at Tuesday's White House briefing when Ari Fleischer, dutifully prepared for just this criticism, could point to only a single statement from the president before the start of the war as evidence that Bush "rather explicitly" explained the "risk" and "sacrifice" of the war.

If anything, the administration's tone only became more confident in the first days of the conflict. Umm Qasr was said to be under alliance control days before it actually was. Iraq's entire 51st Division was said to have surrendered, except that it hadn't. (Its defiant commander popped up in an interview on Al Jazeera a few days later.) The breathlessly promoted "shock and awe" campaign provided little shock and no discernable awe. The masses of Shia who were to greet Americans with cheers and flowers did not appear. Many of these desired outcomes may yet take place, and the war's ultimate conclusion is hardly in doubt. But, if many in the media rushed to proclaim the first week of fighting as a series of setbacks and failures, rather than as a string of anticipated obstacles in the execution of an inherently difficult war plan, the Bush administration has only itself to blame.

DAVID COWLES

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FAREWELL, PAT

ON MARCH 26, THE UNITED States became a significantly stupider country. Daniel Patrick Moynihan died. The strangest thing about his extraordinary career was that his political success seems almost the least of it. His life, in the academy and in public service, was an extended and definitive argument against anti-intellectualism in America, an unforgettable demonstration of the democratic beauty of brains. Moynihan was the great ambassador of the social sciences to U.S. politics. It is hard to think of another official in our time who had so rich an imagination of policy or of another intellectual in our time who had so profound a respect for policy. Was there ever a more ardent believer in the power of government to do good, and then to do better? The fertility of his mind was astonishing. He was a lifelong confounder of categories, a Mozart of controversy. He made many enemies because he had many ideas; and, for the same reason, he made more friends than enemies. He (and Nathan Glazer) brought the subject of ethnicity to the forefront of American consciousness. He goaded and transformed the debate about welfare. He insisted that the danger to the black family in America be candidly considered. He raised his noble, lonely hand in the United Nations against the Zionism-is-racism resolution. When the cold war ended, he taught by example how many precincts of U.S. foreign policy and intelligence policy needed to be reexamined. Long after politicians stopped reading books, the senator from New York was still writing them, real books, actually produced by the individual whose name appeared on the title page, based upon his own study and his own reflection, in an absolutely unmistakable voice. He contributed phrases to the language: "maximum feasible misunderstanding," "benign neglect," "defining deviancy down." (He contributed also to our pages and was a friend and a guide to many of our editors.) He rescued Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. In sum, Moynihan's fingerprints are all over America. And he did it all gleefully, impishly, impatiently, with a curiosity the size of the Capitol. He was the happy American, and his presence in our midst made us happy Americans, too. If there is a heaven, Thomas Jefferson finally has somebody to talk to.

CBS WAGS THE WAR

"I THINK PEOPLE HERE EXPECT [THE war] to begin very soon. I know I do. . . . I think there would be an enormous psychological letdown and disappointment if it didn't begin. I mean, everyone is providing around-the-clock coverage now. And I think that everyone—that the administration wouldn't want to waste everyone's time."—CBS correspondent Bob Simon, on "Larry King Live," Wednesday, March 19

Inside the Box | Bruce Reed

FATHERS AND SONS This time, U.S. forces push toward Baghdad. Bush II to Saddam & Sons: "Your dynasty is no match for ours!"

FERMEZ LA BOUCHE DeLay tells Daschle to shut up in French. DeLay explains: "Wherever I travel, the first thing people teach me is 'shut up' in their language."

DELAY: UPI PHOTO SERVICE; ASHCROFT: REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE

THE BORROWERS House passes bill to make it harder to declare bankruptcy. Hastert: "People shouldn't spend money they don't have. That's what they have us for."

DOGS OF WAR Good news: Ridge prepares emergency survival kit for his three dogs. Bad news: They hide under the bed every time they see his face, just like the rest of us.

MARCH MADNESS Americans turn to NCAA to escape war coverage. Rove's worry: "It's distracting them from our main distraction."

O CANADA Canadians boo Star-Spangled Banner at NHL game: "No offense, but do you have any national anthems that weren't written during a war where you invaded us?"

FREEDOM FIGHTERS FBI recovers early copy of Bill of Rights. Ashcroft to Mueller: "I thought I ordered all those destroyed!"

TOBACCO MAN Angry tobacco farmer paralyzes Washington for two days with bomb threat. Exit interview: "It's a nice place to terrorize, but I wouldn't want to live with all that traffic!"

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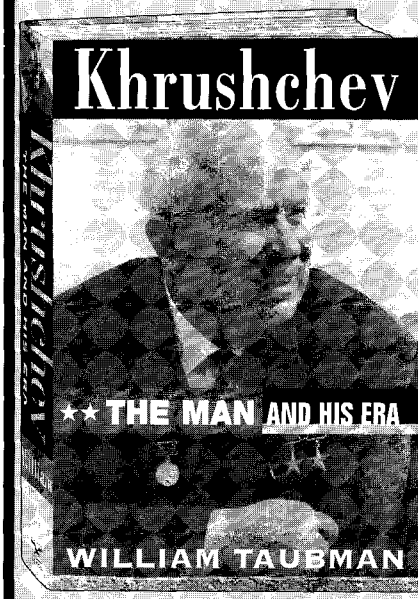

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—Strobe Talbott, *Los Angeles Times*

★

"Masterful and monumental. . . . Fun to read, full of insight and more than a little terrifying."
—Robert G. Kaiser, *Washington Post*

★

"Monumental. . . . This volume, with its brisk, enjoyable narrative, succeeds in every sense: sweep, depth, liveliness, color, tempo. Each chapter shines with mastery and authority."
—*Leon Aron, *New York Times Book Review*

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Mediterranean Sea Dispatch

Smooth Sailing

BY JANINE ZACHARIA

One of the regular features of life on board the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* is the "Bully Big Stick Show"—so titled in honor of the ship's namesake—a weekly call-in program broadcast from the ship's onboard TV studio featuring the commanding officer, Captain Richard O'Hanlon, and his deputy, Executive Officer Terry Kraft. Sometime in the coming days, I am told, the show will boast a new wartime feature: declassified imagery, taken by the ship's fighter jets, of targets they have struck in Iraq. Included will be video of Saddam Hussein's Ar Ramadi palace compound on the Euphrates River just west of Baghdad and a Republican Guard barracks at Al Falluja, also outside of Baghdad. "The idea is to boost crew morale," says one officer on board.

Last Saturday, at 1:45 a.m., morale among the 5,500 people aboard the *T.R.* (as the ship is called) seemed in little need of boosting. Scores of sailors—some who rarely get near the flight deck—jammed a viewpoint called "Vultures' Row" to catch a glimpse of two dozen fighter and support aircraft taking off on their first combat mission for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sporting camcorders and digital cameras, they snapped endless shots—so many, in fact, that pilots on the F-14 Tomcats and F/A-18 Hornets complained to flight control that the flashes were distracting them.

"This is an historic movement for the country and for the air wing," Captain O'Hanlon announced over the ship's loudspeakers shortly before the first planes took off. The point was hardly lost on the 102 pilots on board. This is what they train for. They are the kings—and, in a few cases, queens—of the ship. Despite Iraq's recent capture of American POWs and the memory of Michael Scott Speicher, the still-missing Navy pilot who was taken during the first Persian Gulf war, these pilots are competing to fly in each of the ship's strike or support missions. "You wouldn't be a military aviator in the world's finest Navy unless you had that personality that assumed that you were going to have success. You have to plan for the worst. You have to prepare for the worst. But we go into every mission expecting success," says O'Hanlon, himself an F/A-18 pilot. Commander Anthony Gaiani, an F-14 Tomcat pilot (call sign "Gandhi") who led the F-14 Squadron VF-213 "Black Lions" in the strike on Saddam's palace, says, "I always consider it a great privilege to be in combat for my country." After returning from a six-hour mission this week, Gaiani appeared drained but nonetheless said, "I wish we could go again." A 34-year-old F/A-18 pilot, who goes by "Mongo" (after the character in Mel Brooks's *Blazing Saddles*), has already participated in one mission but cannot wait to be selected again. "I want to get out of here right now, go jump in a plane and do what I can. And that's pretty much the way the whole squadron, the whole air wing feels." Like many people on board, Mongo is also guided by faith. "I'm happy doing this job. And, quite honestly, I believe it's in God's hands." Another F/A-18 pilot, one of the most veteran on board, says he is concerned "about the future of my country and my family." Remembering the photos he has seen of what Saddam did to the Kurds, he says, "That will get you motivated."

That motivation is a lot harder to come by for most of the enlisted men and women on board, however, whose jobs not only lack the glamour and the excitement of the pilots' but are often curiously disconnected from the conduct of the war itself. After nearly three weeks as one of eleven embedded journalists on board, I've discovered that, as a result, most of the young enlisted sailors—the vast majority of the ship's crew—are more or less indifferent to the war. They have not spent much time, on the whole, considering the merits of the confrontation, and their understanding of it is limited. On the first day of the war, I talked to a petty officer from Louisiana who specializes in electronic warfare. "So we went to war," I say. "Is it any different for you?" "No. It's really no different. We all knew it was going to happen eventually, so, I mean, it's just another day. Nothing's going to change."

And, for the most part, he is right. Here on the warship—as opposed to in the skies over Baghdad—training and fighting aren't all that different. There are always flight operations and maintenance on the jets and laundry to do and meals to cook and ordnance to assemble. Planes loudly take off and land on the flight deck, whether or not there's a war going on. And, six days a week, as planes and parts are maneuvered through the massive hangar bay, a bulky exercise coach named James continues to lead dozens of people in an intensive hour of push-ups, sit-ups, and leg lifts in a class bizarrely known as "EOD," or Explosive Ordnance Disposal—since James, when he's not helping people get into shape, is responsible for disarming live bombs. As for myself, I'm getting ready to play in a three-on-three basketball tournament.

The most palpable change as a result of the war is that we have shifted to a night schedule to allow missions to be flown from the Mediterranean Sea 24 hours a day. (Our sister carrier here, the USS *Harry S. Truman*, whose admiral is more senior than ours, has taken the day shift.) Here, most people wake up at 7 p.m. and go to sleep around 10 a.m., rarely, if ever, seeing daylight. Another difference is that the bombs being loaded onto the fighter jets are real GPS-guided ordnance, rather than the dummies used in practice flights.

Understandably, the question that most concerns the majority of the enlisted men and women is not when Saddam will be deposed but when the ship will return to its home port

Janine Zacharia is the Washington correspondent for The Jerusalem Post.

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of Norfolk, Virginia. Most of them have spouses and young children. The wife of a flight-deck officer, Lieutenant Bill Ellis, gave birth a few days ago in his absence. A young female officer named Emily had to choose her wedding dress on the Internet. There are young mothers here, and, for many of their husbands, it is their first time trying to care for their children solo. (The *T.R.* has 800 women on board, more than any other ship in the U.S. Navy.) The cruise puts an incredible strain on marriages.

Much of the crew was aboard during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The ship set sail on September 19, 2001, and spent 159 days at sea without a port call. This time, the carrier left January 6, expecting to be at sea for a five-week exercise. Instead, they were sent to the Mediterranean for an indefinite deployment, throwing many peoples' lives into sudden disarray. Sailors can be heard whispering in the corridors about the latest rumor: They may not go home until November. And a port call soon seems out of the question—the last one was in Crete on March 7—as very few ports are considered safe enough to dock given the high level of anti-American sentiment in the area. Even Haifa, in U.S.-friendly Israel, was deemed too dangerous after a recent suicide bombing there. Beer was loaded on board in Crete—a bad sign. The U.S. Navy is one of the last "dry" navies in the world; only if the ship spends 45 straight days at sea is each person on board entitled to two beers.

A day or two before war started—it is hard to keep track of time here—I asked Petty Officer Darryl Williams, an aircraft-engine mechanic who has been with the ship's company since October 1999, what he thought about the war with Iraq. "Really, it doesn't concern me right now because we're here to do a job," he told me. "That's what we signed up for, so whatever happens, happens. If we do go to war, it's fine. If we don't, it's fine, too." I asked if he supported a military offensive to oust Saddam. "Yes and no. I do because we fight for our freedom. And I don't because it's taking me away from my family." ■

Southfield Dispatch

Majority Retort

BY JONATHAN COHN

Southfield, Michigan

JUST HOURS BEFORE the first bombs fell on Baghdad, the conversation taking place at a suburban Detroit restaurant was laced with ambivalence about the looming conflict. "[Saddam Hussein] is evil," said Dave Nona, an engineer and land developer. "He has caused a lot of hardship and misery to a good country and a good group of people. But that country has suffered a lot, especially in the last twelve years. ... Will it be a merciful war?" Explained Michael Sarafa, president of a Michigan trade association, "My basic problem is that we went from nine-eleven to liberating the people of Iraq in eighteen months. How do you connect the dots?" Building a democracy in Iraq would be nice, added Vanessa Denha, an official with the local county government. But it might also be "wishful thinking."

By themselves, such comments are hardly remarkable. Even today, many Americans continue to harbor questions about the campaign to oust Saddam. But the group assembled at this restaurant were not just Americans: They were Iraqi-Americans, a population widely believed to be unambiguously supportive of the war. In late February, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz gave a rousing speech to several hundred local Iraqis at a meeting hall just a few miles away, provoking chants of "Saddam must go!" and, within days, enthusiastic coverage from sympathetic media outlets. "Iraqi Americans overwhelmingly agree" with Bush's war plans, *The Weekly Standard* reported after the Wolfowitz speech. "IRAQI IMMIGRANTS SEEK SADDAM OUSTER," read the headline on a *Washington Times* story. After quoting one such eager Iraqi, the story went on to note, "His sentiments are shared throughout the largest Iraqi community in the United States, in southeast Michigan: Get Saddam out of power and do it now."

The problem with these accounts isn't that they misinterpret the sentiments of the crowd that attended Wolfowitz's speech. It's that they erroneously assume those sentiments to be typical of all American Iraqis. In fact, as reporters for local outlets such as the *Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News* have noted, opinion about the war among Iraqi-Americans in Michigan largely breaks down along ethnic lines. While Muslims overwhelmingly favor the assault on Saddam, Christians, who make up the vast majority of Michigan's Iraqis, have decidedly mixed feelings.

ALTHOUGH HARD NUMBERS on the American-Iraqi population are hard to come by, it's widely believed that more than 150,000 people of Iraqi descent live in the Detroit area—and that, of those, most are Chaldeans, a Catholic sect that traces its genetic lineage back to the Sumerians, who ruled Mesopotamia beginning in 3500 B.C. In addition to calling themselves Iraq's only indigenous people—Chaldeans are like "the American Indians of Iraq," says Martin Manna, a p.r. consultant—they also claim to have been converted by Thomas the Apostle, which would make them among history's very first Christians. But, while the Chaldeans may have been the first people to thrive in the land straddling the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, they relinquished control of it long ago: Although they remain Iraq's third- or fourth-largest ethnic group—depending on whether you count Shia and Sunni Muslims separately—with 800,000 Chaldeans at most still left in Iraq, they constitute roughly 3 percent of the nation's total population.

That number is small in part because Chaldeans have been

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leaving Iraq for places such as the United States since the turn of the century, first to find economic opportunity and later to flee political persecution. Indeed, it was the rise to power of the Baath Party, and eventually of Saddam, that sent what was probably the largest wave of Chaldeans to the United States from the 1960s through the 1980s. Nowadays, most Chaldeans have at least one family member or friend who has felt Saddam's wrath, even if they haven't felt it themselves. "You know, if you had to pick who's worse—[Saddam], Hitler, or Stalin—you'd have a hard time going one-two-three," says one middle-aged Chaldean, who asked to remain anonymous to protect the safety of relatives still within Iraq. Recalling the experiences that led him to flee in the mid-'60s, he described the public gallows that Baath Party officials set up in the town square and how they used it to make examples of would-be dissenters. "They took them one at a time to the noose, so that that last one actually witnessed the first ones dying."

Still, Saddam never singled out Chaldeans for the kind of vicious treatment he has visited upon Shia in the south or Kurds in the north—presumably because Chaldeans never had the numbers to threaten him politically, as those other groups did. (Apparently, Saddam has also spared Chaldeans some of the cruelties he has visited upon Iraqi Assyrians, the Christian group from whom the Chaldeans broke off centuries ago—and who have been outspoken critics of Saddam for years. According to Assyrian advocacy groups, in the 1970s, Saddam destroyed literally hundreds of Assyrian churches and villages as part of his effort to "Arabize" the population.) As a matter of fact, many Chaldeans within Iraq have remained loyal to Saddam, serving prominently in his regime (as in the case of Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz). For years, Saddam rewarded this service by interfering minimally in the Chaldeans' right to practice their faith. "To be honest, as bad as Saddam is, there are still Chaldean churches in Iraq," says Manna. "He hasn't targeted the Christians so much."

Meanwhile, because the aftermath of the first Gulf war and the ensuing trade restrictions left Chaldeans, like all Iraqis, struggling to find food and medicine, their American counterparts have been among the most outspoken critics of the U.N. sanctions regime. And, as war approached in the last year, Chaldeans have expressed grave concerns about the potential loss of civilian life. "The images I have in my mind from 1991 haunt me all the time," Saad Marouf, chairman of the Chaldean Federation of America, recently told a Southfield newspaper. "There was no food, no medicine, no services. All the shops were closed. There were children on the streets. ... Those are sights I don't ever want to see again."

Sentiments like that are one reason Michigan's Shia Iraqis, many of them veterans of the failed uprising after the first Gulf war, have accused Chaldeans in the United States of being Saddam sympathizers. "Most of them have been supporting Saddam Hussein for a long time," says one exasperated Shia leader who took up arms against Saddam in early 1991, then came to Dearborn after spending several years in a refugee camp. But, even if that were once true of some Michigan Chaldeans, it no longer seems to be the case for most. In my interviews with about a dozen Chaldeans, I detected no unwillingness to condemn Saddam. And, while that could just reflect media savvy on the part of American Chaldeans, it could also reflect more practical considerations—primarily, the fact that Chaldeans in Iraq have recently lost whatever special protection the Baath regime once afforded them.

Indeed, as part of his campaign to make common cause with Islamic fundamentalism, Saddam has been whipping up anti-Christian sentiment in the last few years, closing Chaldean schools and publishing articles in the state-owned press hailing Islam as a superior religion to Christianity. Last August, Muslim extremists reportedly stabbed and then beheaded a 70-year-old nun staying at a Baghdad monastery—prompting Chaldean Church officials within Iraq to warn of a "rising tide of Muslim fanaticism" and of Saddam's "appeasement of that movement."

But, if concern over violent Islamic fundamentalism has hardened the Chaldeans' feelings toward Saddam, it has also intensified their worries about what will happen if he falls. After all, with the Shia making up around 60 percent of the Iraqi population, Chaldeans fear that a poorly managed transition to democracy could easily produce a fundamentalist regime that takes its cues from clerics in neighboring countries, exposing the remaining Chaldeans to even worse persecution than they have experienced under the relatively secular Baath Party. "If the majority of the country are Shiites, and they have allegiances with Iran or Syria, they're going to be anti-Christian," says Sarafa. Chaldean relations with Iraq's other key ethnic group, the Kurds, have been considerably better, particularly since a 1998 agreement on religious minorities guaranteed the rights of Chaldeans within the Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Iraq. Still, a U.S. report on the status of Chaldeans in that region noted "old antagonisms" between Kurds and Christians plus incidents of anti-Christian acts, including bombings, mob violence, and murders.

All of which helps explain why, a few years ago, a report from an Italian-Catholic organization expressed what many Chaldeans probably still think but would be unlikely to say in public: that "for Christians living in the country, even [Saddam's] regime of terror is seen as a lesser evil. Nothing better can be expected either from the collapse of the regime, or from an Islamic revolution. It is hard to imagine a post-Saddam phase." And, while the whole point of U.S. policy is to create secular democracy in Iraq, many Chaldeans don't seem to believe it can really happen. "Why Bush is so sure he can democratize Iraq, I don't know," concludes Sarafa. "The only thing that has kept the peace over there has been dictatorship."

Not every Chaldean shares that sentiment. Many older Chaldeans in particular embrace the war unconditionally, if a bit ruefully. In part, this reflects the fact that they, unlike their U.S.-born sons and daughters, know the horrors of Saddam up close. ("My dad would tell you that this is a great thing," Manna admitted, "because he was forced out with five brothers in the middle of the night in order to avoid being killed.") It also reflects the fact that the older generation recalls the Iraq they knew as merchants: a prosperous, well-educated

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society seemingly capable of sustaining a democracy if only somebody would get one started. "Within the Arab world, it's the only country that has the proper balance of people and resources," says Nona. "Women are educated. It's open. ... If democracy is to take place anywhere in the Middle East, it will be here." Adds Michael George, an executive at a locally based grocery chain, "The people [of Iraq] aren't going to want a dictator. They'll want to go back to when Iraq was the most thoroughly advanced nation in the Middle East." It's worth remembering that comforting prediction, just as long as we remember the more anxious ones as well. ■

Can war sell the tax cut?

Home Front

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

When the Bush administration unveiled its proposed budget early last month, it made no provision at all for war with Iraq. At first, the White House defended this omission by asserting that war might not happen at all. "It would have been very unnatural," argued Budget Director Mitch Daniels on February 3, "to include costs for a conflict that Saddam Hussein could avert at any day by complying with the world community's eleven years of demands that he disarm." (Daniels said this one week after Hans Blix told the United Nations that Saddam was not complying with weapons inspectors and one day after *The New York Times* detailed the Pentagon's plan for war with Iraq.) After war became a certainty, the Bushies shifted to arguing that they couldn't provide a war estimate because, as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld put it, "There's no calculation that you can do about all of these variables." This is roughly analogous to parents deciding they're not going to begin a college fund because they don't yet know what schools their kid will attend.

The suspicion all along was that the administration was delaying its war estimate until after Congress acceded to its proposed tax cuts. Last Friday, when a reporter asked White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer if Bush was postponing his request for war funding until Congress approved his budget, Fleischer replied, "No." Then, that very afternoon, the Senate voted down an amendment to halve the tax cut, apparently paving the way for Bush's plan. (A subsequent vote to shrink the tax cut this week came as a surprise.) On Monday, Bush promptly asked Congress for $75 billion to fight the war and begin postwar peacekeeping. Were the two events related? Not at all, insisted an administration official. Rather, the White House was suddenly able to estimate the war's cost because, "We found that there would not be an immediate surrender of the Iraq regime, that there would be some resistance," the official explained. Of course, this explanation came as the Pentagon was telling reporters that it had never assumed otherwise.

For months, there has been a widespread assumption in Washington that, once the war with Iraq is successfully completed, Republicans will use the patriotic afterglow to push through the most controversial elements of Bush's domestic agenda. What virtually no one imagined was that they would begin doing so as soon as the war *began*. The GOP strategy was set out by a Republican leadership aide speaking anonymously to *Roll Call* this week. "As one evaluates the next three weeks," the aide said, "you have got to say, 'Okay, let's assume in a war context the public doesn't have an appetite for bickering and the president's approval is additional leverage."

One reason for the hurry may be that Democrats and even many moderate Republicans have somehow gotten the idea that it might not make sense to enact yet another huge tax cut as the country embarks upon a war of unknown cost or duration. "I'd put off a tax program until after the war," GOP Representative Amo Houghton recently told *Congressional Quarterly*. Senator John McCain called for a moratorium on any new tax cuts or major nondefense spending. The larger idea, of course, is that wars require some measure of public sacrifice—often tax increases and certainly not large tax cuts. The White House is trying to stamp out this disturbing outbreak of public-mindedness by making a fairly novel argument: It would be unpatriotic *not* to cut taxes. Wartime, according to this administration, demands that we put aside our partisan differences and unite behind the president so he can complete the crucial job of starving the government of the funds it needs to prosecute the war.

Asked a week ago about McCain's plan to postpone tax cuts until after the war, Fleischer replied that tax cuts would ensure that, "when the war is over, our military has jobs to come home to." Since this seems to be the administration's new line—Fleischer has repeated it twice more since—it is worth considering in all its glorious absurdity. First, soldiers aren't going to "come home" after the war the way they did after Vietnam. We now have an all-volunteer, professional army, and the administration is not proposing to shrink its size anytime soon. When the war is over, the soldiers will still have jobs as soldiers. Yes, reservists have been called up, but they have a legal right to resume whatever job they left.

Second, given that the administration's budget projects just one month of combat, the war will almost certainly have ended before the tax cuts are even signed into law, let alone have any effect on the economy. One provision of Bush's tax cut, for instance, would make the estate-tax repeal, scheduled to take effect in 2010, permanent. Now, Bush could honestly argue that those soldiers who serve for seven years and then come home and inherit multimillion-dollar fortunes should not have to pay any tax on their windfall. But doing so would deprive his position of its moral punch.

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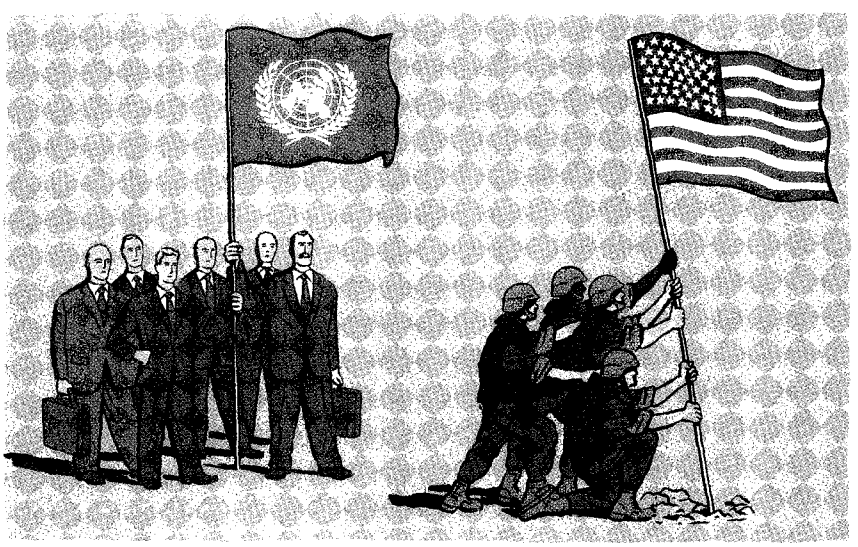
Republicans have also tried to whip wavering moderates into supporting tax cuts by stressing the need for national unity. "They're telling everybody to support the president in a time of war," GOP Representative Cliff Stearns of Florida told *Congressional Quarterly*. The notion that the successful prosecution of the war depends upon passing Bush's domestic agenda in toto may, too, seem counterintuitive at first. The best explication of how this dynamic would work came from Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas. "When our troops are over there fighting," she said in a floor speech last week, "we don't want partisan bickering to be what they see on television from back home." Again, this incorporates a novel understanding of the American soldier. Troops in combat do not, after all, have much opportunity to watch television (and those who do presumably include relatively few C-SPAN buffs). One might also assume that whatever tiny minority of troops has found a way to monitor the floor debate in Congress could, having experienced the grisly carnage of war, take in a contested Senate vote with some equanimity. But let us suppose that there are a greater number of debate-averse, emotionally delicate, news-junkie troops on the front line than one might expect. Surely, the best way to avoid upsetting them is not to ram through a controversial tax cut on a party-line vote, as the White House has sought to do, but instead to postpone the debate until after the war. Of course, that would raise a frightening prospect: debating the tax cut on its own merits. ■

The U.N. tries again in Iraq.

Preoccupied

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

JUST WHEN IT seemed we had heard the last from the United Nations on the subject of Iraq, the battle of Turtle Bay resumed last week. An army of European statesmen regrouped and declared that, having been defeated in their efforts to constrain U.S. power before the war, they intend to pick up where they left off as soon as it ends. The European Union issued a formal statement insisting that "the U.N. must continue to play a central role" in Iraq, and the EU president, Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis, exhorted "the U.N. to manage the whole process" of administering the country's political future. The admonition, European diplomats hastened to add, was directed at Washington.



Pentagon and White House officials believe democracy stands a better chance in Iraq without the help of the United Nations.

CHRISTOPHE VORLET

The State Department, keen to maintain stability in Iraq—and largely indifferent to building democracy there—also hopes for a U.N.-centric postwar plan. Until recently, it had lobbied to keep a strong central government in place under U.S. control for as long as two years. But, with that prospect fading fast in the face of opposition from the White House and the Pentagon, America's diplomatic corps has latched onto the next best thing: a strong central government under U.N. control for as long as two years. Secretary of State Colin Powell and U.N. Ambassador John Negroponte, along with officials from Foggy Bottom's Bureau of Near East Affairs (NEA)—who play an increasingly influential role in the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, where NEA veteran and former Ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine has already been appointed to run civilian affairs in Baghdad—are pushing for a U.N. resolution that would eventually hand over Iraq's postwar administration to the world body.

Just as he did before the war, Britain's Tony Blair has cast his lot with Powell and pressed President Bush to return to the Security Council. Arguing that the U.N.'s imprimatur can improve his political fortunes at home and Britain's image abroad, the prime minister has pushed the White House to come up with a U.N. resolution that, in his words, "governs not merely the humanitarian situation but also the post-Saddam civil authority in Iraq."

Oddly enough, the party undermining this multilateral project is none other than France, which objects not to the substance of the U.N. plan but to the mere fact of its American support. Reacting to a proposal floated by Blair last week that would have lent a U.N. mandate to the postwar occupation, French President Jacques Chirac declared, "France will not accept a resolution of this nature tending to legitimize the military intervention and giving the American and British belligerents the right to administer Iraq." The sentiment was echoed by Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, Sergey Lavrov, who said,

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"It's for [the secretary-general] and not for anybody else to give these proposals."

Far from alarming the Bush team's Euro-phobes, France's reluctance to endorse the postwar vision of Blair and the State Department pleases no one so much as the hawks at the Pentagon, in the National Security Council, and in the vice president's office, as well as more than a few members of Iraq's exile community. Their concern is less the U.N.'s humanitarian agenda than its political inclinations. The Bush team's famed aversion to nation-building notwithstanding, most of its members now concede that American forces will need to do exactly that in Iraq, and they have no objection to the U.N.'s playing a role in at least the nation's physical reconstruction. Hence, they support a U.N. resolution calling for the resumption of Iraq's oil-for-food program and the assistance of U.N. humanitarian-relief agencies.

At the same time, they fear the effect of inserting the world body into the minutiae of Iraq's political life and believe the country's future would be far better served if the United Nations were confined to digging latrines there after the war. "I'm praying [the French] keep this up," says a senior administration official. "If the U.N. has a say in [postwar] Iraq, the first thing they'll probably do is put Saddam back in power." Specifically, they worry that Iraq could be transformed into an arena of competition among Security Council members and a laboratory for U.N. ineptitude. Equally worrisome is that an all-powerful U.N. proconsul in Baghdad could diminish rather than encourage the prospects for democracy in Iraq. British and EU officials invoke the "Kosovo model," which calls for a U.N. commissioner or administrator to wield ultimate authority in the realm of Iraqi politics as well as humanitarian affairs, as a useful precedent. But, for good reasons, that is not yet the official U.S. position.

ONE OF THOSE reasons derives from the avowed purpose of this war: the liberation of Iraq. Just as Iraqi exiles argue that an extended period of American rule will retard the growth of Iraqi democracy, they argue that a similar period of U.N. rule would be, if anything, an even greater impediment. "A U.N high commissioner will be easily manipulated by outside forces," predicts Entifadh Qanbar, Washington representative of the Iraqi National Congress, who worries particularly about the influence of anti-democratic Arab governments. "The U.N. will give us bureaucracy at the expense of democracy." Indeed, while it may have other virtues, the United Nations, where Libya currently presides over the world body's Human Rights Commission, has hardly distinguished itself as an agent of democratization. Whether in Bosnia or, more recently, in Kosovo, U.N.-sanctioned administrators have repeatedly expressed a preference for order over liberty—subverting nascent democracies through procedural gimmicks, arbitrary edicts, and the summary firing of democratically elected officials.

The clearest failure of the "Kosovo model" has been Kosovo itself. As no less a supporter of the world body than U.N. authority Roland Paris recounts in his forthcoming book, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, "The powers of Kosovo's elected assembly were limited and subject to the oversight of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, who retained the right to dissolve the assembly, call for new elections, and veto any measure passed by the assembly that violated the purposes of the operation." Indeed, not six months after convening a representative assembly in December 2001, Kosovo's elected officials found one of their first resolutions annulled by the U.N.'s special representative, Michael Steiner, on the grounds that it implied a desire for sovereignty. Reaching deeply into Kosovo's political arena, the United Nations has dismissed government officials, barred campaign rallies, and now presides over a network of ostensibly representative local councils whose edicts it can overturn on a whim.

In Iraq, the likelihood that the aims of a U.N. proconsul would run counter to the aims of democracy may be even greater. To begin with, says Ralph Wilde, a U.N. scholar at the University of London, "what we find in the arena of civil administration is the considerable use of appointees to the United Nations—former officials of national governments, for whom U.N. service is an interlude in a career of state service." And State Department officials predict that, were the United Nations to appoint a high commissioner for Iraq, the post would almost certainly be filled by a native Arabic speaker—most likely an Arab diplomat such as U.N. Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi or chief nuclear inspector Mohamed El-Baradei—who balances the interests of the Iraqi people with the broader agenda of the Arab states, not one of which qualifies as a democracy. "Arab governments would much rather have a U.N. administrator in Iraq," says liberal dissident Kanan Makiya, "and, if [the administrator] is a member of one of those governments, Iraqis will simply be governed by the lowest common denominator of Arab politics, which is certainly not democracy."

There is also the problem of competing national interests. A decade ago, then-U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali predicted that the United Nations "may emerge as greater than the sum of its parts." Alas, the organization has in recent years revealed itself to be no more, and often considerably less, than that. During the 1990s, France and Russia transformed the U.N.'s mission in Iraq into an arena for pursuing their own political interests (the most important of which seemed to be constraining the United States) by, among other things, refusing to endorse incriminatory findings by U.N. inspectors in Iraq, repeatedly attempting to water down the U.N. sanctions regime, and violating the sanctions themselves. And there is no reason to expect that, given half a chance, they will behave any better this time—particularly in light of France's words and Russia's deeds last week, when Paris vituperatively condemned the U.S. invasion and news emerged that Moscow has been shipping military equipment to Saddam. The prospect of a national government rigging a multilateral operation for its own purposes is hardly without precedent. In Bosnia, French representatives repeatedly thwarted U.S. attempts to capture war criminals

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such as Radovan Karadzic by alerting them beforehand, and, in Kosovo, they even passed along NATO military secrets to the Serbs. In Iraq, too, Chirac's opposition to "giving the American and British belligerents the right to administer Iraq," as he put it last week, plainly suggests that, having failed to prevent an American-led war, France intends to subvert an American-led peace.

The irony is that even the Bush team's hawks do not envision the administration of postwar Iraq being a wholly American enterprise. On the contrary, they hope to cede political control as quickly as possible to the Iraqis themselves—lest American soldiers come to be seen as oppressors rather than liberators and precisely because they fear the taint of imperialism. In their view, the debate is not about U.N. versus U.S. rule. It is about U.N. versus Iraqi rule. And, like Iraq's democratic exiles, Pentagon and White House officials believe that democracy stands a better chance of flourishing in Iraq absent a cadre of political administrators from East 42nd Street.

Hence, the Bush team's dilemma: In Iraq, the White House desperately wants the U.N.'s humanitarian assistance, but it just as desperately wants to sidestep its political assistance. To this end, the administration's postwar plans draw some fairly sharp distinctions—between Iraq's security, which it aims to maintain via the U.S. military; Iraq's political arena, where the United States quickly hopes to empower Iraqis themselves; and the task of humanitarian aid and reconstruction, which Washington hopes to accomplish through a combination of Iraqi oil revenues, nongovernmental organizations, U.S. aid, and the United Nations. But drawing a clear distinction between the U.N.'s political and humanitarian roles—a distinction the Europeans are keen to muddle—may not be so easy. Acknowledging this, the Bush administration may now offer two separate U.N. resolutions, one governing Iraq's humanitarian needs and the other essentially approving a U.S.-British military occupation. Alas, the Europeans probably won't settle for anything less than a resolution that fully inserts them into Iraq's political life. Then again, they're not the ones fighting this war. ■

On the Hill

Private Opinion

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

IN RECENT WEEKS, a visibly angry Orrin Hatch has been appearing regularly on the Senate floor to vent about the Miguel Estrada nomination battle. More precisely, Hatch has been denouncing the filibuster mounted by Democrats to prevent a straight up-or-down vote on the Hispanic would-be judge, a vote that would surely place Estrada on the powerful D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. The Democrats' tactics are "shameful" and "despicable," rages Hatch, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, an effort to "murder" Estrada and "destroy this man's career." During one February 26 harangue, Hatch got so worked up he later had to apologize for violating Senate decorum.

Hatch's bitterness, shared by many Senate Republicans, stems from the fact that in the most important judicial battle of the Bush administration to date, the GOP has few good options. Thanks to the careful spadework of their leader, Tom Daschle, Democrats are prepared to sustain their filibuster indefinitely—or at least until Republicans meet their one key demand: The Bush administration must release dozens, perhaps hundreds, of internal memos Estrada wrote as a top lawyer in the solicitor general's office from 1992 to 1997. No memos, Democrats say, no vote.

Democrats covet those memos, which contain Estrada's recommendations and legal opinions about a range of Supreme Court cases involving the federal government, because they're the only way to assess this genial cipher. Just 41 years old and a partner at the Washington law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Estrada has never been a judge and has hardly published an opinionated word. Because he is such a blank slate, many Democrats are convinced Estrada is a "stealth" ideologue who could wind up on the Supreme Court as a Hispanic Clarence Thomas. Estrada's almost cartoonish evasiveness in his single confirmation hearing didn't quell those fears: Estrada refused to name a single Supreme Court case over the past 40 years with which he disagreed and claimed that, although he is openly pro-life, he hadn't developed an opinion about *Roe* v. *Wade*. "My view of the judicial function . . . does not allow me to answer that question," he coyly explained.

To hear Republicans tell it, the Democrats' memo request is outrageous, unheard of, nothing less than a threat to the republic. Last month, Hatch claimed it would set an "earth-shaking" precedent: "Never in the history of this country has anyone given those documents out of executive branch to the Senate or to anybody else." Republican Senator Michael Crapo argued that "the Department of Justice has never disclosed confidential deliberative documents on career lawyers in the solicitor general's office." And, in a February 12 letter to Daschle, White House counsel Alberto Gonzales wrote that such memos had to be withheld so as to "maintain the integrity of the Executive Branch's decisionmaking process."

One reason Senate Democrats haven't been swayed by these arguments is that they're really not true: Democratic researchers have unearthed records from at least five judicial-confirmation hearings in which government legal memoranda were delivered to the Senate. Their favorite example is the Justice Department's release of memos during Robert Bork's 1987 confirmation battle, written by a lawyer in the solicitor general's office who held precisely the same job as Estrada. (Some Republicans have suggested the memo was not formally released but rather leaked, though they offer no evidence that this was the case.) Also instructive are memos written by

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Justice William H. Rehnquist when he was a Supreme Court clerk in the 1950s, which were made available to the Senate for his 1971 and 1986 hearings. As Evan P. Schultz recently pointed out in *Legal Times*, the Rehnquist example shows why these memos might help Democrats learn more about Estrada: In one of them, Rehnquist argued that, even though "it is an unpopular and unhumanitarian position," the 1896 *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* case—which upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation—"was right and should be reaffirmed." Schultz notes that the memo turned out to be a pretty good preview of Rehnquist's votes on the Supreme Court. Democrats don't know just what cases Estrada might have had a hand in, but they believe he concentrated primarily on criminal cases and may have "questioned or criticized a lot of landmark criminal decisions," according to one Judiciary Committee aide.

Senior Democratic Judiciary aides say several GOP senators would prefer to release at least some of the memos. Indeed, two Republicans, former GOP leader Trent Lott and Utah's Robert Bennett, have said as much publicly. But, as one Democratic aide puts it, "The White House said no." Which raises a question about the White House's real motivation: Is it safeguarding Estrada's nomination or safeguarding the secrecy of executive branch documents? Time and again, from the papers of former presidents to notes from Dick Cheney's energy-plan meetings to Justice Department deliberations over the Clinton scandals, the Bush administration has viewed the privileged nature of its internal documents as inviolable.

All of which leaves Senate Republicans in a tight spot: trying to shepherd through a nominee the White House very much supports but lacking any clear means, short of giving up the memos, to get him through. Little wonder, then, that they're contemplating extreme measures. Last week, *The Washington Times* reported that Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum was considering ways to increase pressure on Democrats after Congress returns from its Easter recess in late April. And Lott, apparently still itching to play field marshal, added that he had a plan of his own that might allow Republicans to circumvent a filibuster, which takes 60 votes to break, and confirm Estrada with a simple 51-vote majority. Lott wouldn't give details but ominously warned that his plan would mean going "nuclear."

WHAT MIGHT LOTT'S "nuclear" option be? Two potential scenarios have Democrats chewing their nails. The first would be an audacious GOP effort to change Senate rules and outlaw filibusters in the case of judicial nominations—a possibility that Senate Republicans have suggested in both word and deed. Several Democrats note bitterly that Hatch, the Judiciary Committee chairman, has lately been circumventing committee rules when they've proved inconvenient. In a February 27 hearing of appeals court nominees Deborah Cook and John Roberts, for instance, Hatch shut off debate over Democratic objections and forced a vote on the nominations—even though, as Democrats pointed out, the committee's rules clearly require the support of at least one member of the minority party (which Hatch did not have) to end debate. Instead, he simply claimed—for the first time that anyone could recall—that the rule didn't apply to nominations. Democrats were similarly astonished when Hatch held one January confirmation hearing for three controversial nominees—Cook, Roberts, and circuit court of appeals nominee Jeffrey Sutton—even though Senate leaders of both parties had agreed in writing in the mid-'80s that controversial nominees would be considered one at a time, a pact that had been honored ever since. "He just unilaterally changed the rules," complains an anti-Estrada lobbyist.

Republicans' rhetoric also fuels the suspicion that they intend to unilaterally amend Senate rules to end the Estrada filibuster. "I believe what [Democrats] are doing is blatantly unconstitutional," Hatch argued on the Senate floor last week. "If the Founding Fathers wanted to allow or require supermajority votes with regard to the advise-and-consent clause, they would have said so. They did not. The natural conclusion from any constitutional scholar would be that we are entitled to an up-or-down vote as the exemplification of the advise-and-consent clause." Republicans take this notion so seriously that Dick Cheney—who, as vice president, also serves as president of the Senate—took a two-hour break from planning the Iraq war earlier this month to preside over a GOP-orchestrated Senate debate on the constitutionality question. "I think they'll try to undo the cloture rule via the Senate rules," predicts a Senate Democratic aide closely involved in the Estrada fight. But doing so, warns Illinois Senator Dick Durbin, would "invite a response and a chaotic result"—suggesting that Democrats might shut down the chamber in protest by raising endless procedural objections to Senate business.

The other, arguably more plausible, "nuclear" option would be a recess appointment. In that scenario, President Bush could simply install Estrada on the court when Congress is out of session, possibly as soon as next month's Easter recess. If appointed this way, Estrada could serve until the end of 2004 before having to face a Senate vote on his permanent confirmation. "If I had to bet, I'd say they recess-appoint him in August," says a senior Democratic Judiciary aide.

But, while a recess appointment would be a short-term victory for the White House, it could come at a heavy cost—Estrada's future as a Supreme Court justice. "Estrada's future, if he has one beyond the D.C. Circuit Court, would be over," Durbin says. "He could not be considered for anything else at that point. That's why I think [a recess appointment] is the White House's last option." Media coverage would focus on the fact that Bush had circumvented the confirmation process, immediately branding Estrada a "controversial figure." Institutionalists of both parties would be galled at such a slight to the Senate. (Just imagine how many hours Robert Byrd would spend waving around his copy of the Constitution.) Conservative Republicans themselves went on the record opposing recess appointments after Bill Clinton's 2000 recess appointment of Roger Gregory, his long-stalled nominee to a Virginia circuit court. (It is "outrageously inappropri-

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ate for any president to fill a federal judgeship through a recess appointment in a deliberate attempt to bypass the Senate," Oklahoma Republican James Inhofe fumed at the time.) And a recess appointment could well alienate moderate senators, especially Democrats who might otherwise consider supporting Estrada. "People would oppose him just on principle," says a leading anti-Estrada strategist.

So Republicans appear stuck with a bitter stalemate and "nuclear" options that could blanket them and their nominee in radioactive fallout. Their only way out would appear to be releasing Estrada's memos. It makes for an interesting case of political physics: The Bush White House's need for total victory on Estrada is an irresistible force, while its fetish for executive branch secrecy is an immovable object. Look for Orrin Hatch to offer more apologies in the months ahead. ■

Malabo Dispatch

Trade Union

BY MICHAEL PEEL

ON A SUNDAY just before Christmas in a village near Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the silent air is more reminiscent of a church service than of the presidential election taking place that day. A young woman approaches the open-air voting table, picks up a paper showing President Obiang Nguema's picture, and hands it to an officer for sealing and posting in the ballot box. Five security agents look on, including two military men, a police officer, and a man bearing a black uniform, sunglasses, and gold teeth who describes himself as "reserve police." Three of them openly display firearms.

Three days later, Equatorial Guinea learned that President Obiang had won reelection with more than 97 percent of the vote. But the polling has yet to prompt much public criticism from the United States. It's true that, in its annual report last year, the State Department criticized the denial of freedom of speech and the use of torture and arbitrary detention by Equatorial Guinea's security services. Still, far from denouncing the elections, or Obiang's government more broadly, Washington has confirmed that this year it will reopen the embassy in Equatorial Guinea that it shut down in 1995. The State Department states on its website that the two governments have "good" relations, adding that Equatorial Guinea says human rights abuses in the country are the result of "excessive zeal on the part of local authorities."

Obiang isn't the only Central or West African autocrat receiving favorable American attention these days. President Omar Bongo has ruled for more than 35 years in Gabon—the State Department calls relations between the two countries "excellent" and says the United States provides military training to members of the Gabonese armed forces. Cameroon, ruled by President Paul Biya for more than 20 years and criticized in the past over human rights abuses, has worked closely with the United States on a number of initiatives since joining the U.N. Security Council last year. Angola, whose president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, was once fiercely opposed by the United States because of his leftist politics, has enjoyed a deepening relationship with the United States. The State Department says this reflects "Angola's role as a major energy source and recognition by the U.S. of Angola's regional importance."

To many observers in Central and West Africa, the reason for America's new interest is clear: Recent years have witnessed large offshore crude-oil discoveries in the Gulf of Guinea, which stretches down Africa's Atlantic coast, that could provide huge opportunities to U.S. businesses. ChevronTexaco, which has invested almost $5 billion in Africa-related energy projects over the last five years, plans, together with its partners, to invest a further $20 billion over the next five. But, despite pledges like last year's national security strategy commitment to work to build an African continent of "liberty, peace, and growing prosperity," the United States is accused of failing to use its leverage to push these oil-rich nations toward democratic values. Instead, at a time when the United States claims to be confronting authoritarian regimes in Arab oil states, it appears to be buttressing them in African ones.

IN A REGION of stunted polities, Equatorial Guinea—a country of just half a million people—has amassed a particularly dismal record since it gained independence from Spain in 1968. President Obiang, who took power from his murderous uncle in a 1979 coup, introduced multiparty democracy in the early '90s only to win 98 percent of the vote in the 1996 presidential election, which international critics claimed was plagued by ballot-rigging. The most recent election was set for February. But, in November, Obiang called it early, leaving little time for the opposition to prepare. Around town, his preprinted posters hung from government and business buildings and far outnumbered the opposition's. In the port town of Luba, troops drove around the day before the election in a silver Toyota minivan with posters of Obiang's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea stuck to its front and back. Clemente Engonga Nguema, the interior minister and head of the country's nominally independent electoral commission, insists the army is apolitical.

At the same time, Equatorial Guinea is already the fifteenth-largest oil supplier to the United States—production is dominated by U.S. companies such as ExxonMobil and is expected to rise to at least 300,000 barrels per day as exploration and production are ramped up in the coming years. Not only is the United States reopening its embassy in Malabo, but President Obiang visited the United

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States in 2000 and 2001 and met with senior officials. The State Department reports growing commercial ties between U.S. companies and Equatorial Guinea: The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. government's overseas-investment promotion agency, struck its largest deal in sub-Saharan Africa with Equatorial Guinea in 2000. The result? "I think the more oil they have, the more arrogant they are becoming," says one foreign diplomat about Obiang's government. "They feel more strength: Given the geopolitical situation, the U.S. is paying more attention to them."

The United States is showing similar interest in other autocratic oil states in Central and West Africa. American officials estimate that Africa accounts for 15 percent of U.S. oil imports, and they forecast that sub-Saharan Africa alone is expected to supply 25 percent of America's crude-oil requirements by 2015. Walter Kansteiner, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, toured Central and West Africa twice in the second half of last year, including visits to Nigeria, Gabon, and Angola. Last year, Sao Tome and Principe, a tiny archipelago nation of fewer than 200,000 people, received a visit from General Carlton Fulford, deputy commander-in-chief of the U.S. European Command. The trip fueled rumors of American intentions to build a large military base in the Gulf of Guinea, although the Bush administration has denied such plans exist.

President Bush himself adopted a friendly tone of cooperation when he met ten Central African heads of state at the U.N. General Assembly in September. The leaders included the presidents of oil-rich but repressive nations such as Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Cameroon, and Gabon. (In return, the presidents committed themselves to supporting U.S. policy on terrorism and the Middle East.) At a lunch in his honor held six days later in Washington by the Corporate Council on Africa, Obiang praised the U.S. administration's efforts to bring about "greater understanding and solidarity" in Central and West Africa. The Corporate Council's website says it represents companies accounting for almost 85 percent of U.S. private-sector investment in Africa, with members including large oil companies such as ExxonMobil and ChevronTexaco.

In Nigeria, where ExxonMobil and ChevronTexaco are the country's second- and third-largest oil producers, the State Department made little public fuss when massacres were carried out by the armed forces under Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military dictator elected as civilian leader in 1999. State Department officials say the United States has provided training to help equip the Nigerian army to function in a democratic society and participate in West African regional peacekeeping missions. Still, Kansteiner visited Nigeria in July, amid reports—which he denied—that the United States was pressuring Nigeria to leave OPEC. Next month, when Nigeria attempts its first successful transition between civilian governments since independence in 1960, ballot fraud is widely expected, and election-related violence has already begun: Two weeks ago, a leading opposition politician was killed, a murder condemned by Obasanjo. In a candid insight into international attitudes toward the region, one Western diplomat says the irregularities are likely to be serious but not so bad that rich nations will be unable to "avert our eyes."

To be sure, oil isn't the only issue: The United States has also courted African countries in its diplomatic campaign against Iraq. Guinea, Angola, and Cameroon hold seats on the Security Council, and Guinea took over the rotating presidency at the start of March. Kansteiner visited Guinea and Angola in February and held talks with Cameroon's President Biya in Paris. For Guinea, criticized in the past by the United States for its record on democracy and corruption, it was the second visit by the assistant secretary in a matter of months.

Whether it is oil or Iraq, though, U.S. policy in oil-rich Africa has been decidedly nonjudgmental, despite the most flagrant violations of democracy. In Malabo, the day before the election, residents showed me how voting would take place in a large, open area where an abandoned truck dominated the town center like a rusting village monument. The ballot would be held publicly, they said. "Here, there is no other person to vote for," explained one man. "There is one candidate only." Many Equatoguineans say there's one foreign sponsor that is helping ensure it remains that way. ■

Sulaymaniya Dispatch

Second Front

BY ELIZABETH RUBIN

THROUGH MY HOTEL room window, I can see soldiers—dressed like commandos, not like baggy-panted Kurdish *peshmerga*—rearranging themselves around a machine gun mounted in the wagon of a white Toyota pickup. They're often there, jumping out of the truck, jumping back in, speeding off. They are guarding Barham Saleh, the prime minister of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), who lives behind my small hotel in Sulaymaniya. A year ago, Saleh came home from the Palace Hotel just down the street, and three Islamic fighters leapt out of their car firing madly. Five of Saleh's bodyguards were killed. The mother of one of the bodyguards died of a heart attack when she heard the news. Two of the assailants were killed instantly; the third tried to creep away with his wounds but was captured.

The attackers were from Ansar Al Islam, an extreme Is-

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lamist group that the PUK has been fighting under a variety of names since September 2001, when the fundamentalists announced their existence and their intention to resurrect the early Islamic caliphate system of religious government throughout Kurdish northern Iraq. Many are Arabs who fled the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan. Less than two months ago, they assassinated a PUK diplomat and former military commander in Halabja, which is near Ansar territory and about two hours from Sulaymaniya.

Just days after American soldiers began battling the Iraqi army across the country's southern deserts and ports, they opened a new front here in the north against this comparatively small Islamic group tucked into a few mountain villages next to Iran. It's a tiny war, but one apparently significant enough in America's war on terror to warrant 50 cruise missiles and American Special Forces. And it fits into the Bush administration's preemptive-strike ideology as laid out in the National Security Strategy document of 2002. Kurdish and American officials have long claimed that members of Ansar established ties with Osama bin Laden as early as 1994 and that they created an Al Qaeda cell within the more moderate Islamic groups in northern Iraq, receiving financing from bin Laden and training in the Afghan camps. The last thing the Kurds or any future Iraq needs is a terrorist network of angry, displaced Al Qaeda members from around the world nestled in gorges, caves, and folds of the mountain range bordering Iran.

A FEW WEEKS ago in Sulaymaniya, five men in a four-wheel-drive jeep pulled up at a checkpoint and were sprayed with gunfire by *peshmerga* from the PUK. The men, who were all killed, turned out to be members of a different Islamist group, called Komal, that controls territory in northern Iraq and that heretofore had been on relatively good terms with the PUK. The PUK swore the shooting was an accident, that their boys had information the jeep belonged to Ansar. Komal reacted with rage and mourning and, the next day, invited a group of journalists to its headquarters to hear its complaints.

We drove east from Sulaymaniya toward the Iranian border through the tranquil, green farmlands of the Sharazur plain, one of the widest in Kurdistan and, say the locals, one of the most fertile in the world. Fertile for battles as well—between Iraqis and Iranians, Kurds and Iraqis, Kurds and Kurds, secularists and Islamists. There lies Halabja—which will forever be remembered for Saddam Hussein's chemical attack in 1988. And behind Halabja, in the Shinwe mountain ranges, are the redoubts and villages held by Ansar. Our driver was cursing his fate as we slowed to pass through the bazaar of Khormal, the town where Komal (the two words are unrelated) is headquartered, and we were eyed grimly by heavily armed, long-bearded men. Unlike in much of the rest of Iraqi Kurdistan, there were no women in the streets. Over a brook and up into the foot of a snow-dusted mountain that shelters these men, some 30 or so Komal militants milled around the two-story cement headquarters of Sheik Ali Bapir, the doe-eyed, black-bearded young leader of Komal's *peshmerga*. As we spilled out of our jeeps, the men lined up quickly. Suddenly, we were like two enemy armies—the cameras facing off against the long-beards. One by one, the journalists—the men, that is—filed past to shake the Komalis' hands; we women just nodded our heads in greeting.

A Komali in a brown-fur, Russian-style hat said they didn't know if the PUK had really believed the men they killed were Ansar fighters. "Perhaps," he said, "they think we're the same types." Are you? someone asked. "We have a common border with them; they come here for food sometimes. But we have different ideas. We want to spread our ideas by negotiation. They want to spread them with fighting," he said. A dark-windowed Land Cruiser sped up the slope and stopped in front of the compound. Ali Bapir stepped out, grinned, and greeted everyone. He appreciated, he said, that he has already gotten a letter from Jalal Talabani, the powerful PUK leader, saying the attack had been planned against Ansar, not Komal. Ali Bapir began a slow lecture to the journalists sitting on the floor about the definition of terrorism and the fact that the PUK's unprovoked killing of five of his men indeed constituted it. "It's just a local story," one reporter, impatient, whispered. "An insignificant internal feud, let's get out of here." Another said, "Their crime? Driving while bearded"—a play on the "driving while black" slogan young African American men use to explain why their cars are frequently pulled over by the police. Another reporter, perhaps desperate to turn this into an international story, asked Ali Bapir and just about any other Komal Islamist wandering around, "Don't you think the Americans could have been behind it?" Everyone looked puzzled, and he explained, "You know they were killed near the airstrip the Americans plan to use for their forces." The Komalis didn't answer him.

Ali Bapir served kabob, bread, and tea and then said goodbye. In the village, on a slope of the mountain, a sturdy mother of seven children stood by her gate. Two of her sons are with Komal's *peshmerga*. Why? "It's not up to us," she said. "Komal decided to live here because the mountain protects them." The villagers here are just like leaves, blowing this way and that for decades, running from chemical attacks, from the Iranians, from the Iraqi army. Her house was destroyed and rebuilt three times. Now, she said, she's afraid of everyone—the PUK, Ansar, the Americans. Saddam, she said, is the least of their worries; he's so far away.

THE STORY OF the current Islamist presence in northern Iraq begins in 1986, in Halabja, with five brothers led by the eldest, Sheik Osman. The people of Halabja were on the streets demonstrating against Saddam's cruelty. The Iraqi army retaliated by leveling the square where they demonstrated. Osman and his four brothers and their families fled and settled at the foot of a snowy mountain in a refugee camp with thousands of others from Halabja who were fleeing Iraqi military service, arrest, and retaliation. One of them was Ayub, nine years old at the

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time, who told me the history: Sheik Osman and Sheik Ali and their brothers were well-known figures in Halabja. "Sheik Ali was the preacher of Halabja's second-biggest mosque, which was called Pasha Mosque," Ayub recalled. "Because of this, they drew the attention of the Iranians, who proposed the idea of creating a political Islamic party for them. It was called the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan [IMK]. Sheik Osman was appointed the leader. The people in our camp were extremely poor refugees and angry with the Iraqi regime, and they began registering their names eagerly. One of the first to sign up was my brother. He signed up his name in the tent of Sheik Omar, who was paying out everyone's salaries." For Iran, the IMK was a perfect sword to stick in the back of its enemy, Iraq. The Iranians took some IMK members, including Ayub's father, to Iran and gave them guns and education. The fighters infiltrated Iraq, guiding hit-and-run attacks, sneaking around at night to inform people that a new party had been born.

In 1991, the IMK descended from its mountain hideouts to help the Kurdish uprising against Saddam and began establishing bases throughout Kurdistan. They were a moderate group, but, as with so many other moderate Islamic groups, extremists began infiltrating, spawning several splinter groups over the last decade, including Ali Bapir's Ansar and Komal. As internal Kurdish fighting broke out, the extremists jumped into the fray, attacking the secular Kurdish parties for having relations with the United States. Then, in 2000, the PUK's Talabani made what everyone says was a fatal mistake: To retaliate against his enemy Massoud Barzani, of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), he made a deal with one of the extremist Islamist factions and paved the way for them to set up a base in the villages near Iran. In September 2001, Islamic radicals split from the IMK and formed a group called Jund Al Islam; they immediately began fighting against the PUK. Since then, it's said that Jund Al Islam—and its successor, Ansar Al Islam—has killed some 200 of Talabani's fighters. Former Ansar hostages say Ansaris pray to Sheik Osama. The United States says they have ties to Al Qaeda. The Kurds say at least 100 to 200 of them are foreign *jihadis*. And, now, they've retreated into mountains and caves that locals say are a copy of Tora Bora.

Four nights ago, U.S. cruise missiles slammed into Komal's checkpoint and into Ali Bapir's headquarters where we ate lunch; one, which didn't detonate, even hit Ali Bapir's home. At least 40 Komalis were killed. Others were injured. Six died at the Iranian border while the Iranians decided whether to let them in. Was this a justified hit on terrorists? The Americans claimed it was an attack on Al Qaeda–connected terrorists, a battle in the war on terrorism. And it's true that Ali Bapir has now vowed to join forces with Ansar Al Islam. His is a hardcore Islamist group that already has connections to Ansar and sometimes gives its members refuge. But they also say they eschew terrorism. After the U.S. attack, the Komalis were again enraged. Why, they asked, were we targeted? Why, replied the Kurdish leaders, did you mingle so freely with Ansar when you were warned repeatedly to differentiate yourselves or suffer the consequences?

THE DAY AFTER the U.S. missile attack, we drive through the wide, green plains to Halabja and snake our way up a mountain road to a bunker where the PUK *peshmerga* are reveling in the U.S. attack. Mamrosta Dler, a teacher and sniper dressed in fatigues and sneakers, tells us that at about 12:30 a.m. they watched cruise missiles sail in from the Red Sea, past their position, and dive into Dekon, missing the target. But, we interrupt him, his commander said the missiles landed in Khormal and that Komali fighters were killed. He smiles, and the other *peshmerga* laugh. "Three rockets hit Khormal, but we didn't want to tell them," Dler admits to our translator, signaling that he meant us, the American journalists. "We would like the Americans to bomb every single village under Komal and Ansar. Last night, we watched Komal vehicles heading for Ansar. They are just the same."

Another *peshmerga* says, "It was such a great pleasure to hear the missiles. They sounded just like slow-moving jets. But we're unhappy with the Americans. We expected more bombs. This isn't enough." Still, they say, they were pleased with their American military visitors. Six of them, they say, arrived at midnight, three in army uniforms, three in civilian clothes. "The civilians stayed to spot the targets," says Dler, "and were repeatedly contacting the jets and U.S. bases." They shared a ridge with the Kurds but no words, no tea, no meal. They stuck to themselves, did their work, and left at around 6 a.m.

The clouds disperse, a mist lifts off the lake in the distance, the sheep swarm through glistening, wet green fields. There is a strange quiet all around us. One of the *peshmerga* leads us inside the bunker where Ansar had lobbed a few grenades and killed several sleeping Kurds when they overtook this hilltop for a day in December. Graffiti drawings of the Ansar leaders still blacken the bunker walls.

Abdullah Hama Said Fakradin, the intelligence officer of the PUK forces based in Halabja, steps out of his Land Cruiser and says we should leave, they have an important meeting. But, first, he wants to tell us that the beginning of the end of Ansar's existence has come. "In the next few days, all the Kurds here will be able to experience the freedom the other Kurds do in Kurdistan." Already, he says, drivers can now use the road where Komal had its checkpoint outside of Khormal without any risks. The PUK, he says, has taken control of the road following the U.S. attacks.

We take Fakradin at his word and drive down the hill to the crossroads outside Khormal, where we'd visited Ali Bapir just a few weeks ago. A jalopy with four young civilian men from Khormal idles at the checkpoint. They are in a hurry to flee Khormal to safety before the next round of U.S. attacks. They say the bodies of Komalis are stuck under the Komali political office that was hit by a tomahawk missile. One Komali is still crying out from beneath the rubble, but they are too scared to go near the building. Other cars, packed with women, are peeling out of Khormal. Some say many angry Ansar gunmen came down from the hills into the Khormal bazaar. Others say it was just a few. A team from

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Al Jazeera television warns some of the journalists at the checkpoint to leave quickly. Another car comes by and warns a photographer that I'm traveling with to get her flak jacket. Something isn't right. We get into our jeep, arguing about which way to go, and then comes a metallic explosion I can feel at the back of my head and through my bones. It is only two cars away. We think it is a mortar, maybe a car bomb, maybe a suicide bomber. Our car shivers from the blast, and our driver speeds off. Behind us rise plumes of gray smoke. A pickup barrels ahead of us, its back tire spitting out rubber, a bleeding *peshmerga* holding in his lap a friend whose head is oozing brain.

The pickup skids to a halt in the middle of a crowded market in the town of Sayed Sadiq, controlled by the Kurdish Socialist Party and the generally jolly Kakar Hama, a rotund party leader and commander whose territory abuts Komali land. He has been a mediator between the Komalis and the PUK with an eye toward expanding his territory into Komali lands. We pull up behind the pickup, in front of the military hospital. The patient is lifted up clumsily through the crowd and is carried into the back of a van. Toyota taxis and pickups are racing in, dropping off wounded. Inside, one young man who is lying on a bed with a piece of shrapnel in his knee says he'd just come to the checkpoint with his cousin to look for his relatives. He says he watched a Toyota on the road from Khormal swerve into the dirt as it neared a cluster of Kurdish *peshmerga* outside the guardhouse. "I thought it was strange, and then it blew up, and I fell to the ground and came back conscious and ran through the bushes. Women and children were crying. Mullah Asim, the minister of religious affairs, saw me running and brought me here in his car. I think some foreigners might have been killed. They were quite close to the car that exploded, and their translator was wounded." By now, it is becoming clear that the explosion was a suicide bomber who detonated himself inside the car.

More wounded are arriving. An older woman, her head wrapped up in white cloth. An enormous old man, whom they can hardly carry out of the jeep. A doctor kindly takes a pile of cash from one shy young man's breast pocket, shows it to him, and transfers it to the young man's pants pocket. "Don't worry," says the doctor, "you'll be cured soon." The doctor peels off the man's shirt, inserts an I.V., and prepares him for transfer to the Sulaymaniya hospital. A *peshmerga* arrives and shouts, "No, he's not going anywhere. He tried to run away. He's an Islamic. He's under suspicion." Someone shakes their head in sympathy and remarks that, even if he had nothing to do with the bombing, the *peshmerga* will take their anger out on him.

We walk out. Outside, a tall Australian gets out of a maroon jeep, the windows blown out, blood on the back seat. He is trembling, breathless; he asks to borrow our phone to call Australia. His friend, he says, is dead. I recognize the man as one Australian journalist's translator. His hands are blistered and burning. His head is bleeding. His leather jacket is shredded in the back from the blast. He says he had a funny feeling when he saw the Toyota swerve off the road, and he turned away just as it detonated. The gates of the hospital swing open, PUK security men rush in to donate blood. The gates swing closed and open again as a taxi backs up to the hospital door. The driver opens the trunk, then quickly drops it shut as everyone turns away. It is the unrecognizable body of the journalist. Their driver tells a sad story about some of our colleagues who arrived, filmed the carnage, but refused to take the body away. "He's a foreigner, but they just took pictures and went away," says the taxi driver.

Someone says it was definitely a suicide bomber. "An Islamist taking their revenge for last night's bombing" by the Americans, indirect revenge against the Kurds and, possibly, against the Western journalists amassed there. Someone else says there are more cars ready to come.

There, shaking his head, is Ayub, who was nine years old in the Iranian refugee camp when the IMK was born in 1986; the movement scooped up his father and brother for two years before they wised up to the extremists among them. "This is the beginning of our country becoming the next Palestine," he says with tears in his eyes.

TONIGHT, THE PUK's Talabani is negotiating with the leaders of Komal through Kakar Hama. Inside Khormal, Komal's Ali Bapir has close to 700 fighters, and their families are terrified of another round of U.S. cruise missiles. Some of them are probably angry enough at the Americans to join up with Ansar; Ali Bapir is afraid of losing everything. Talabani is afraid Ansar will slip into Khormal and have another base. Kakar Hama explains, "Yesterday Ali Bapir was here for lunch with the Iranians"—who are helping in the negotiation. "I told him, 'Be mindful, man, don't be silly. Look at the Iranians. In the past, when they had any problem, even a comet dropping from the sky, Iran blamed it on America. But now Iran is acting differently, mindfully.'" Kakar Hama takes a breath, leading us out of his compound into the howling rain. "'Iran is such a powerful country,' I told Ali Bapir, 'and they won't take on the USA, but you with a handful of *peshmerga* want to take on the Americans. Think wisely, Ali Bapir.'" ■

Class Action

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Life Changings

HAS ROBERT DUVALL GONE out of his professional mind? The worry seems legitimate, especially for an admirer, after **ASSASSINATION TANGO**. Ever since I first saw him, in an Off-Broadway production of Miller's *A View From the Bridge* in 1965, Duvall has seemed to me one of the few American actors in both theater and film who needed only to decide to be great in order to reach classical greatness. That Miller performance, his later theater work in *Wait Until Dark* and *American Buffalo,* and his film performances (to name only a few) in *Apocalypse Now, The Seven-Per-Cent Solution, The Eagle Has Landed,* and, above all, *Tender Mercies* affirmed that Duvall had astonishing range and gravity. Long ago I began hoping in print that we would see him—on stage and, yes, on screen—as Macbeth and as Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkman and as Ridgeon in Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma,* which are only some of the major roles that seemed to be waiting for him to take them on. Duvall's films kept coming steadily, but usually within the compass that steady film work allows. An exception was *The Apostle,* which he also wrote and directed, an overlong and unoriginal work about a Southern preacher that at least had serious intent. But now...

ASSASSINATION TANGO
(United Artists)

THAT GIRL FROM PARIS
(Films Philos)

Now in his early seventies, Duvall writes, directs, and stars in a film about a New York hit man who is hired to go to Buenos Aires to kill a political tyrant, and who there falls in love with the tango and a tango teacher. This strange combination might have produced either a dark comedy or a drama of belated realizations. Neither happens. The combination itself doesn't happen—thematically, anyway. *Assassination Tango* is a series of disconnected scenes alternating between two story lines, neither of which is cogent or concluded. The picture is tinged with the irrational.

The clunks start with the first scene. Duvall is at a nightclub table with a twelve-year-old girl—his girlfriend's daughter, we learn—and is teasing her about dancing with him. The sequence could bear a subtitle asking us to note that this man, despite what happens later, has heart. The pieces of the plot are then slapped in, often with Duvall speaking what sounds like improvised staccato dialogue, as he accepts his hit assignment, goes to Buenos Aires, and meets the aggrieved people who have hired him through some Argentinean criminals. He makes preparations for his job that are unexplained and unbelievable; then he happens to see the lovely Luciana Pedraza tangoing marvelously in a dance hall, and cannot, as Yeats said, know the dancer from the dance. The businesslike hit man goes tango-mad.

To this plot mélange add factual slips. Duvall travels with one smallish bag, yet his wardrobe is inexhaustible. The tyrant-target is delayed out of town by an accident, yet turns up when expected. He is heavily guarded, yet Duvall walks into his garden simply by flourishing a bunch of flowers and pretending that he is there to deliver them.

Duvall returns to New York one evening—after his tango rhapsody, after having murdered two men—to the little suburban house where he lives with his girlfriend and her child. They go inside and he closes the door, as if he were putting an ironic finish on a completed film. But it is a bag of bits—loose ends that smack of hurried stitching and adjusting.

Through the story—the two stories—moves this wrinkled man who wears a ponytail apparently to show that he is young at heart, rapidly running and climbing as often as possible to show that he is not arthritic. The worst is that he seems not to be proving anything to us but to Pedraza, who is described in the publicity packet as his "longtime girlfriend." The film has been awkwardly contrived to launch her almost as much as to give Duvall youthful elbow room. The publicity also tells us that Duvall and Pedraza did a tango at a White House state dinner in 1999; thus to all the troubles of the presidency was added the discomfiting sight of a beautiful dancer partnered by an elderly man wishing that he were young. That discomfit happens here, often.

Duvall has directed several times before, especially well with a documentary about a Nebraska rodeo family called *We're Not the Jet Set.* His direction of *Assassination Tango* is his best contribution to the film—strong, almost like a series of punches. In Buenos Aires, he splices in some acute glimpses of the city's life and quirks. (In one shot a "living statue" Jesus lies down on the lap of a truly statuary Madonna.) But despite the muscular directing, *Assassination Tango* seems an aberration. Temporary, Duvall's admirers will hope.

Film-making countries often develop signature plot devices. For instance, many recent American films dwell on strange relationships between criminals and police. (*Dark Blue,* discussed here a few weeks ago, isn't even the latest of them.) In France one of the recurrent devices has been the conjunction of people who wouldn't ordinarily meet. It's not the "they gotta meet cute" of Hollywood romantic formula: these French films sometimes have no romance in them. Years ago, its title forgotten, there was a French comedy about a judge, motoring on holiday, whose car breaks down and who has to stay at an inn run by (although he doesn't know it) professional thieves. In *The Two of Us* a Jewish child is quartered in wartime with an old man who is a rabid anti-Semite. Now comes **THAT GIRL FROM PARIS.**

A hip Parisienne of twenty-nine, a computer expert, has always longed to be a farmer. After a breakup with her boyfriend, she buys a goat farm in the Rhône Alps from an old farmer. The farmer doesn't like her and doesn't think she can manage the farm; still, he sells the place to her—with one proviso. For family reasons, he won't be able to move out for eighteen months. So,

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in separate houses, the vigorous young woman and the unfriendly old farmer have to live together for a time.

Of course we know that reconciliation will come. Precisely the point of films in this genre is to provide pleasant predictability. We collaborate, in a way: we chuckle silently as, so to speak, we make the film ourselves. The screenplay by Christian Carion, who directed, and Eric Assous pulls no punches about farm life. The ancient wisdom about farming is that it consists of sex and murder—breeding things and harvesting things—and Carion doesn't spare us the murder part: the slaughter of a pig, the birthing of kids, the decapitation of sick cattle.

The film is helped considerably by the straightforward Mathilde Seigner, who convinces us—well, almost—that this woman wanted to make such a complete change in her life and can handle it. Anyway, we want to believe it so that the film can exist. The old man is the veteran Michel Serrault, who began in films in 1954 and who takes care of his role with delighting ease. In contrast, this is Carion's first picture. He has directed it with fidelity to the genre, rather than with exceptional talent. The cinematography was by Antoine Heberlé, who offers the breathtaking Rhône Alps to replenish us whenever the film gets thin. ■

Sean Wilentz

Freedoms and Feelings

Taking politics out of political history.

THE PASSIONS OF ANDREW JACKSON
By Andrew Burstein
(Alfred A. Knopf, 292 pp., $25)

EARLY IN 1834, AT THE HEIGHT of his war with the Second Bank of the United States, President Andrew Jackson received at the White House several deputations of businessmen, who pleaded with him to change course. Believing that the Bank was an unrepublican, unaccountable monopoly, Jackson had vetoed its federal recharter and ordered the government's deposits in it removed. The Bank's president, Nicholas Biddle, had lashed back by sharply curtailing loans and note issues, thereby causing a national financial panic. Privately, Biddle admitted that he was holding the American economy hostage in order to save his beloved, well-stocked, privately managed bank. But publicly he blamed Jackson for the economic catastrophe; and for a time the nation's leading capitalists believed him.

Jackson replied to the businessmen's entreaties with a rage that was already legendary. One delegation of New Yorkers entered Jackson's office to find the president hard at work at his desk, writing and puffing furiously on his pipe. Looking up quickly, Jackson excused himself and went back to his writing, leaving his visitors standing mute until he finished. At last Jackson put down his pen. The group's spokesman had gotten through a few sentences of a prepared statement praying for relief when Jackson cut him off: "Go to Nicholas Biddle. We have no money here, gentlemen. Biddle has all the money. He has millions of specie in his vaults, at this moment, lying idle, and yet you come to me to save you from breaking. I tell you, gentlemen, it's all politics." Gesticulating wildly, his voice raised to a fevered pitch, Jackson continued his tirade against Biddle and the Bank for fifteen minutes, then politely allowed his blanched visitors to depart, having ratified their doubts about his sanity but leaving no doubts whatsoever about his determination.

As the chastised delegation descended the White House staircase, safely out of earshot, Jackson exulted over his performance. "Didn't I manage them well?" he chuckled to one of his aides. And so he had. The nation's business leaders duly went to Biddle, to no avail. Within months they had turned against the Bank, blasting the devious Biddle for trying to ruin them all in order to get even with Jackson, and forcing him to end his capricious curtailment. By the end of 1834, the panic was over and Jackson had won the battle over the deposits, and the broken Biddle, his bank mortally wounded, began a descent into megalomaniac fantasy in which he, not the frontier Catiline Jackson, would emerge as the great hero of his day.

This oft-told tale of Jackson's crafty, calculated use of feigned political frenzy does not make it into Andrew Burstein's purported study of Jackson's passions, which is actually an excoriating indictment of what the Frenchman Michel Chevalier called Jackson's "empty prejudices." This is not surprising, since Burstein portrays Jackson as the slave of his vengeful fury, never as its master. But Burstein also says little about the Bank War, one of the central episodes of Jackson's presidency; and what little he does say is tendentious or factually inaccurate. Endorsing Biddle's view of the matter, Burstein leaves the cursory impression that the Bank War merely confirms what he, Burstein, has divined as Jackson's destructive impulses. It is a botched job of historical analysis, and it is typical of this conceit-driven book.

IF CARL SANDBURG'S MASSIVE SENTIMENTAL biography was, as Edmund Wilson remarked, the worst thing that had happened to Abraham Lincoln since Booth shot him, then *The Passions of Andrew Jackson,* a far slighter effort, is one of the worst things that has happened to Jackson since a deranged housepainter tried to assassinate him in 1835. (One of the other worst things, Michael Paul Rogin's notorious study of Jackson's supposedly "genocidal" Indian policies, *Fathers and Children,* which appeared in 1975, strongly influences Burstein's book.) Jackson's greatness, like Lincoln's, will survive. More troubling is what Burstein's book says about the current state of political biography and political history in America. Like many non-academic writers of would-be historical blockbusters, Burstein is chiefly interested in plumbing the character of his subject, explaining Jackson's drives and tics and phantasms, while emphasizing the primary importance that Jackson placed in his own assessment of other people's characters. Like many academic writers of historical monographs, Burstein approaches his subject with what he calls, a little too proudly, "an attentive dissection of language" and an exploration of "the politics of memory." (That latter phrase is itself definitive proof that no new ground is being broken here.) Above all, Burstein proclaims, he offers a "dispassionate" reading of Jackson's correspondence, supposedly the key to Jackson's all-important inner life.

Not that Burstein is willing to defend his own interpretation as truthful, exactly. He is a firmly au courant perspectivist in

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the matter of historical truth. "Biography," he writes, buzzwords blazing, "is never a faithful record. It is a construction, a clandestine effort to refashion memory, to create a new tradition, or sanction yet another myth about what is past." Too many writers, caught up in their ideologies and their pretenses, Burstein says, refuse to recognize this, but he does not refuse. With a pretentious and misleading nod to Hannah Arendt, he claims that his is but "a provisional portrait of the historic Jackson," one that scrupulously eschews offering "emotional" evaluations of Jackson's greatness but simply tries to take his measure as a man across the distorting vastness of time.

In doing these allegedly modest things, Burstein displays an ignorance, a slipshod respect for facts, and a tone-deafness all his own, on matters ranging from the essentials of American political theory to the works of William Shakespeare. He also lightly carbonates commonplace interpretations regarding Jackson's inflated sense of patriarchal honor, duty, and loyalty and offers them up repeatedly as if they were discoveries. Worst of all, Burstein's relentless promotion of character, language, and memory above all else contributes to a denigration of politics and political ideas that has become common among contemporary writers of American political history, most conspicuously among best-selling biographers such as David McCullough and Edmund Morris. And in denigrating politics, Burstein reserves special condescension and condemnation for the liberal democratic politics advanced first by Thomas Jefferson and then by Andrew Jackson. Reasonable in manner, smooth in style, the book appeals to the enduring popular interest in American political leaders that university historians of the past generation, drawn to social history, have too often ignored. But Burstein's effort to fill the gap is undone by his obscure drive to write about politics while demeaning politics, thereby producing a deeply political, hostile, and unreliable gloss on early American democracy.

II.

"THE PASSIONS OF ANDREW JACKSON," its author writes, "is not to meant to make the past 'familiar' or more venerable or less venerable, but to make it tempting." What on earth is "tempting" history? Anyway, Burstein does his utmost to render Jackson not simply less venerable but positively repugnant. On page xix, he abjures "emotional" determinations of Jackson's greatness, but the rest of the book is an obsessive effort to make precisely those kinds of determinations, sometimes with Burstein wearing his heart on his sleeve. Much of this comes in the book's final chapter, a farrago of pseudo-scholarly invective that denies that Jackson was in any way a liberal democrat. Instead, Burstein asserts, Jackson was a hubristic zealot and a stone-cold killer of a kind that properly nauseates those right-thinking Americans "who identify with the world's oppressed and seek remedies for the sins of violence and covetousness."

This is basically the ancient rap against Jackson as power-mad brute, once purveyed by conservative Whigs, Southern pro-slavery hotheads, and radical abolitionists and now embraced mainly by the academic left, in works such as Rogin's or Howard Zinn's topsy-turvy "radical" history of the United States. Burstein's contribution to this recycled literature of vilification, apart from his annoying self-regard, is to link it both to his own weirdly reactionary antagonism to early American democracy and to a newer interpretation of Jackson as a lethal defender of his own reputation—the champion of an unforgiving, racist code of manly honor that governed the early Southwestern frontier.

Burstein builds his case by following the chronological narrative of Jackson's life, with the occasional stop or side trip to examine episodes and letters that he deems significant. Jackson was born in 1767 to a family of hardscrabble Ulster Irish emigrant farmers in the Waxhaw district along the piney-woods border of North Carolina and South Carolina. (To this day the two states argue over where he was actually born, although the scholarly consensus seems to favor Jackson's own belief that he was a native South Carolinian.) His father died in a farming accident the year he was born, and the rest of his immediate family was wiped out, one way or another, in patriotic service during the American Revolution. Jackson, a boy soldier and, in time, a British prisoner, nearly got wiped out too when, upon his refusal to black one of his captor's boots, the offended officer mutilated him with a sword blow to his head.

Alone in the world at the age of fourteen, Jackson eventually wandered to North Carolina, where he apprenticed at law, then moved west to Tennessee. With implacable ambition and the help of carefully cultivated connections, he rose to become one of Nashville's leading lawyers and, in time, one of its most successful slaveholding cotton magnates. In 1795, he was elected as Tennessee's first member of the House of Representatives, and two years later he advanced to the United States Senate. Six years earlier, under hazy circumstances that turned out to be legally irregular, Jackson had taken the love of his life, an abandoned wife named Rachel Donelson Robards, as his spouse.

IT IS A SAGA RICH IN IMPLICATIONS about the military and political leader that Jackson would become. The Revolution, and the famous boot-blacking incident, might seem worthy of particular attention, given Jackson's bitter and undying hatred of the British empire and monarchy, as well as of all American institutions he believed tainted by privilege and "aristocracy." But Burstein passes over these matters quickly, construing them merely as early examples of the price that Jackson would pay for his "principled insolence." Burstein is much more interested in speculating about Jackson's youthful connections with the fading Catawba Indians of the Waxhaw district and how they might have shaped what he describes as Jackson's later Indian-hating. Unfortunately, there is not a shred of evidence about Jackson and the Catawbas, so this does not carry Burstein very far. Much more fruitful, it seems at first, is Burstein's investigation into Jackson's marriage, which leads him to claim that what we have been told for two centuries is false, that Andrew and Rachel were "willing adulterers" who, before they were legally married, knowingly shared a bed out of wedlock—a fact that Jackson's propagandists tried desperately and all too successfully to cover up.

The lasting significance of this discovery is a little vague. "Adultery" of the sort that Burstein describes was common on the Tennessee frontier, where (as in the rest of the country) legal divorces were hard to obtain and de facto separations or mutual abandonment could constitute socially satisfactory divorce. Burstein's discovery might help to explain Jackson's later distaste for the pious moralism of Eastern elites, North and South, as well as his patriarchal solicitousness toward women he believed had been wronged, in particular (and with considerable consequences) a young Washington woman named Margaret Eaton. But the real problem, as Burstein's own footnotes and appendix show, is that his discovery about the circumstances of the Jacksons' marriage is really no discovery at all, as he finally gets around to admitting. Based on virtually the same evidence, Robert V. Remini, Jackson's greatest living biographer

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(whom Burstein disdains as a hagiographer), offered, more guardedly and as one of several possibilities, more or less the same interpretation of Jackson's supposed "adultery" that Burstein now hypes as a dramatic reversal of the conventional wisdom.

Here is the extent of Burstein's scholarship on the Jacksons' marriage: the corrected dating, made three years after Remini published his account, of a letter previously believed to have been written in 1794 but actually written in 1791, which now makes the so-called "adultery" scenario more probable. Remini could not possibly have known about the misdating when he wrote his version in 1977. Burstein is merely the beneficiary of a correction made in 1980 by the editors of *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*. And even then Burstein's claim remains only an informed hypothesis of which the larger significance is wispy at best.

AT THE NATION'S CAPITAL IN Philadelphia in 1795, Congressman Jackson quickly fell in with the Jeffersonian opposition, denounced the Jay Treaty as too soft on Britain, and played a minor role in paving the way for Thomas Jefferson's election as president in 1800–1801. Jackson struck some of his fellow congressmen as a Western oddity. (The Jeffersonian leader Albert Gallatin described him as "a tall, lank, uncouth-looking personage," his long hair bunched in "a queue down his back tied with an eel skin.") Jackson, for his part, found the national political stage frustrating, and he returned home in 1798 to assume a judgeship, tend to his properties, and pursue what he had determined was his true vocation, a career in the military.

Jackson would get his first military commission, as commander of the Tennessee militia, in 1802, but new adversities had begun plaguing him on several fronts even before he left Congress. In 1795, he had endorsed a promissory note from a Philadelphia speculator who went broke, thereby ruining Jackson's own finances for several years and leaving him with a permanent distrust of credit, financial paper, and banks. Back on his feet by 1806, Jackson then found himself embroiled in a complicated running feud with a local lawyer named Charles Dickinson that began with Dickinson making improper remarks about Rachel Jackson and ended with Jackson shooting him dead in a duel. Since Jackson, having already taken a bullet in the chest, was allowed to re-cock his pistol after it misfired, charges of dishonor clouded his reputation.

Worse, once Jackson's wounds had healed, he resumed his entanglement with the wandering adventurer Aaron Burr, and with Burr's scheme (not wholly explained to this day) to create a breakaway empire in the West. To his horror, Jackson eventually learned that some of Burr's confederates were plotting treason against the United States. Embarrassed, he returned to his new estate, the Hermitage, purchased additional land and slaves, gambled on his gamecocks and racehorses, lavishly entertained his friends and political contacts, and endlessly quarreled with his detractors, at times with pistols drawn—a self-made Southern gentleman, restlessly awaiting a war.

When a war finally came in 1812, it was against Jackson's mightiest enemy, the British, along with the major fifth column in the Southern theater, a faction of rebellious Muskogee Indians (called "Creeks" by the Americans) of the upper Alabama region. As major general of Tennessee's U.S. volunteers, Jackson conducted a brutal two-year campaign against the Creeks, ending in a crushing triumph at the battle of Horseshoe Bend in which the entire Creek nation submitted to Jackson's authority. Jackson won his longed-for prize, a commission as major general in the U.S. Army. And then Jackson turned his fury against the foe that had scarred him for life thirty years earlier. With questionable authority, he overcame a combined force of British, Spanish, and Indian soldiers at Pensacola in Spanish Florida. Then came his—and his country's—greatest military feat of the entire war, the lopsided victory over a huge British invasion force outside New Orleans on January 8, 1815. Unbeknownst to Jackson or his opponents, a treaty of peace had been signed in faraway Ghent two weeks before the climactic battle. But Jackson's stunning success deprived the British of the use of New Orleans and the lower Mississippi Valley as bargaining chips in any future negotiations. It created the impression that a war that actually concluded in a stalemate was a smashing American victory. And it turned Andrew Jackson into a national idol, the greatest American military hero since George Washington.

BURSTEIN'S INTERPRETATIONS of Jackson's middle years are sometimes strained and mainly banal. Most of the events and the experiences that might have led him to consider Jackson's evolving political ideas—Jackson's years in Congress, the effects of his personal financial difficulties, the sectional and party debates that swirled around the War of 1812—get short shrift. (This is not completely lamentable, as Burstein's recitation of the period's basic political facts is sometimes questionable. For example, Burstein describes the New England Federalists' protest Hartford Convention in 1814, a set piece in our political history, as a hotbed of secessionist plotting, when it was actually a moderate-controlled effort to forestall secession.) Gallatin's visual impression of young Congressman Jackson turns up earlier in the book as a prelude to a fanciful discussion of Jackson's "savage" Indian-like qualities in the eyes of others—qualities, Burstein surmises, that propelled Jackson's rage to prove that he was anything but an Indian. Burstein's encounters with politics inevitably dissolve into speculations about cultural symbols and inner conflicts.

Mainly, however, Burstein sticks closely to his preferred topics: Jackson's duels, his vengeful war with the Creeks, his confusion over character and trust in the Burr affair, his craving for military honor and glory that carried him to national renown at New Orleans. Some of this makes for vivid reading, especially the description (borrowed from the account by James Parton, Jackson's greatest nineteenth-century biographer) of the feud with Dickinson. But a lot of it is just a fancy sort of innuendo—such as Burstein's suggestion that Jackson deserved less credit than he received for the New Orleans victory, and that his young protégé General William Carroll, who commanded the Tennessee and Kentucky riflemen on the left side of Jackson's line, deserved more credit—but the vain and ambitious Jackson hogged the laurels for himself. This, even though Jackson, Carroll's superior officer, oversaw the entire American effort, and even though no evidence exists that Carroll felt slighted.

Burstein does look into some crannies of Jackson's correspondence that previous scholars have ignored, and he proffers his own view of the maddeningly elusive Burr Conspiracy; but mostly the revisionist Burstein re-affirms what previous scholars have said about Jackson's attachment to the rough-and-tumble code of Southern frontier honor. It is deflating to be reminded that, in Burstein's words, Jackson's "controversies over honor" show "the importance of symbols, and of gesture, in defining manhood," as if this were some thrilling new notion. And it is wearisome—given the previous extended discussions of the matter by such prominent scholars as William Freehling, Kenneth Greenberg, Charles Sellers,

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Bertram Wyatt-Brown, and of course Remini—to learn all over again that Jackson was "a man with ironclad principles, a man easily angered, a man who held back little," a "calculating" man who "was not very self-reflective," a man given to "the advocacy of violence to settle personal disputes," a "nostalgic, fatalistic, chaste, and generous" man, shaped by the rigors and the mores of the Southern slave-holding frontier.

Virtually all of this has been said before, much of it very long ago. In 1860, the biographer Parton described Jackson as someone who possessed certain Scots-Irish traits "to an exaggerated degree"—"honest yet capable of dissimulation . . . at home and among dependents, all tenderness and generosity: to opponents, violent, ungenerous, prone to believe the very worst of them . . . not taking kindly to culture, but able to achieve wonderful things without it." Burstein notes Parton's portrait and dismisses it out of hand for its Victorian racial stereotyping—but how similar the two writers' descriptions actually are. Substitute Southwestern culture for Scots-Irishness as the matrix of character and Burstein's Jackson is virtually identical to Parton's Jackson. There are some sociological improvements in Burstein's account, nearly a century and a half later—no more ethnic labeling, please!—but as a description of "the passions of Andrew Jackson," the improvements are microscopic.

IV.

In covering the last phase of Jackson's life—from his troubled post-war military command through his tempestuous presidency and retirement—politics becomes unavoidable. It is here that Burstein's book falls to pieces and becomes a cautionary example, both as a work of interpretation and as a piece of scholarship. And it is here that Burstein's contempt for Jackson and for early American democracy bursts fully into view.

Continued attacks on the Georgia frontier by Seminole Indians and runaway slaves based in Florida led to Jackson's return to active military service in December 1817. In a campaign that produced an international uproar, he took his troops in Spanish Florida, captured St. Marks and Pensacola, and executed two British subjects. Abandoned by President Monroe and (secretly) by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Jackson might well have been reprimanded but for the intercession of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, who persuaded Monroe that Jackson's actions had been justified and then utilized the incident to secure the cession of the Floridas by Spain to the United States. After resigning his commission in 1821, Jackson returned to politics, winning a Senate seat in 1823 and finding himself, a year later, touted as a presidential candidate. With the nation torn economically by the lingering effects of the disastrous Panic of 1819 and sectionally by the debates that led to the Missouri Compromise, Jackson caught on as a candidate of popular reform who would not betray Southern interests.

In a four-man race, Jackson ran well ahead of his closest rival, John Quincy Adams, both in the popular vote and in the electoral college—but because he failed to win an electoral majority, the decision was given to the House of Representatives. The least successful candidate, Henry Clay of Kentucky, threw his support to Adams; and Adams won the House majority and immediately named Clay as his secretary of state. Jackson concluded that a corrupt bargain had thwarted the majority's will and robbed him of the presidency. For the next four years, Jackson and his supporters plotted their revenge. In 1828, after a vitriolic, mud-splattered campaign, Jackson ousted Adams in a landslide. Determined to prevent any future corrupt bargains, he took office with a pledge to purge the national government of encrusted privilege. But he did so in deep mourning, for shortly after the election Rachel Jackson suddenly died, broken (or so Jackson believed) by a scurrilous pro-Adams propaganda campaign, coordinated by Henry Clay, which had slandered her as vulgar and immoral.

Jackson's eight-year presidency got off to a rocky start with the infamous Margaret Eaton affair, in which the matrons of Washington's salon society, led by Floride Calhoun, the wife of Vice President John C. Calhoun, snubbed Mrs. Eaton, newly wed to Jackson's secretary of war, as a low woman of suspicious reputation. Jackson, still grieving for Rachel, instinctively and then fanatically championed Mrs. Eaton as the parlor scandal polarized and nearly consumed his administration. It took a full-scale Cabinet shake-up to dispel what Jackson's confidant Martin Van Buren called "the Eaton malaria" and to allow the president to pursue his reform agenda undistracted.

Early in his tenure, Jackson contemplated numerous improvement schemes, ranging from a constitutional amendment to abolish the electoral college and to elect presidents by simple majority vote (an idea that got nowhere) to the regular rotation of executive branch officers (a plan that Jackson implemented and that garnered praise from the likes of Jeremy Bentham). But in the toils of politics, three matters came to dominate Jackson's presidency: the comprehensive federal removal of the remaining Eastern Indians westward across the Mississippi; the defeat of South Carolina's radical anti-tariff nullification movement led by the fractious Calhoun; and the destruction of the Second Bank of the United States.

Burstein's psycho-cultural approach works best in analyzing the Eaton affair, though he adds little of consequence to earlier interpretations of it. Here was a drama that fully engaged Jackson's manly, protective passions, pitting a common but (in Jackson's view) blameless woman against a phalanx of censorious, privileged snobs and their priggish supporters. That the affair provoked such bitter divisions within Jackson's government, while exposing what William Freehling has called "the gulf in sexual morals between Charleston and Nashville," exemplifies how in Jackson's time, no less than in our own, the personal became the political. But the rest of Jackson's presidency confounds such analysis. It is perfectly true that Jackson tended to personalize his political conflicts, identifying individual enemies as the demi-urges

Monarch

From milkweed to lupine a woman shadows
a monarch. Slowly makes her way, conveys

her weight with care. And in the womb her son
flutters, then butterfly-kicks against walls.

The woman tracks a trail of burnished wings,
migrating into the heart-notch of forest,

then settles on a lichened tree-trunk where
underground rivers flowing out of snow-

mountain lakes rumble the decree of her
unborn son: *"Journey farther, journey deeper."*

Into darker woods she transports a monarch
ruling, even now, unnamed territory.

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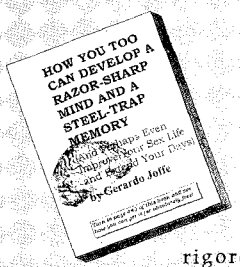

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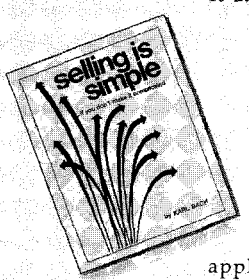

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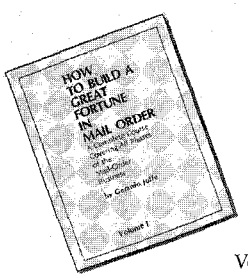

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behind evil policies, institutions, or ideas. Parton put it well in 1860: "He hated the whig party much, but Henry Clay more; nullification much, but Calhoun more; the bank much, but Biddle more." Yet those conflicts also involved ideas, institutions, and interests—that is, politics, which Burstein takes pains to suppress.

On Indian removal, the greatest stain on Jackson's presidency, Burstein follows Rogin. By this view, bluntly, Jackson was an Indian hater and a vengeful destroyer of Indian culture. Deeply offended that, as an unschooled frontiersman, he found himself likened to the lordly savages of the forest, Jackson did his utmost to distinguish himself from the Indians—and then became fixated on achieving their utter subjugation. "Before he became president," Burstein writes, "Jackson was consistently dismissive of the federal government for its weak-willed accommodations with the Indians. He preferred dictating terms or carrying out what can only be called primitive aggression in asserting whites' power over the Indian nations." His policies as president brought the cataclysmic fulfillment of Jackson's racist fury.

One need not be an apologist for Jackson to see that this is a foul caricature. As Burstein elsewhere acknowledges, Jackson's denigration of the Indians became more patriarchal than genocidal. In pushing the Indians westward against their will, Jackson truly believed that he was helping to preserve them, not to destroy them—a destruction that would be absolutely certain were the Indians simply left in place, subject to the tender mercies of land-hungry whites and antagonistic state governments. Above all, Jackson's policies were rooted in politics as well as in passion. Since Jefferson's time, Jackson observed, federal Indian policy had been based on a cynical piecemeal strategy that held out the false promise of Indian assimilation but was actually geared to expropriating their lands. This "farce of treating with Indian tribes," as Jackson called it, served nobody's interests, while it created a potentially dangerous political anomaly of autonomous tribal governments existing within the boundaries of individual states. Jackson undertook a comprehensive federal solution to a problem with no easy remedy, one that previous presidents either had tried deviously to finesse or had cravenly ignored.

Politics also shaped the shameful, murderous dénouement of Jackson's policy. As soon as Jackson announced his removal plans, his political opponents—including the heretofore ardent Indian-hater Henry Clay—tried to turn them into a partisan issue, which only led Jackson to dig in his heels and dismiss all criticism, including sincerely humanitarian criticism, as politically motivated. In implementing removal, moreover, Jackson tried to do so on the cheap, in line with his larger effort to reduce federal spending. This only compounded the suffering of the Cherokees, the Choctaws, and the Creeks on their westward trek. Ironically, between the costs of making treaties and sending federal troops to enforce them, the policy ended up spiking federal expenditures in Jackson's final year in office to twice what they had been in his predecessor's final year. But the greater irony was that, in his quest to spare the Indians from annihilation, Jackson set in motion the destruction of thousands of them through deprivation, dislocation, and death. The result is no less horrifying than the one that Burstein describes, nor any less of a blot on Jackson's presidency. But by ignoring the politics of Indian removal, Burstein suppresses the underlying tragedy of this history in favor of a lurid racial melodrama.

V.

Burstein calls Jackson's handling of the nullification crisis "arguably the noblest action [he] took over the course of his two terms," and it is hard to disagree. Persuaded, wrongly, that federal tariff rates were to blame for falling cotton prices, South Carolina's political leaders—the most coherent pro-slavery, anti-democratic ruling class in the nation—rose up in defiance in 1832. Under the doctrine of nullification, as refined and advanced by Calhoun four years earlier, the rebels met in a special state convention that declared the existing tariff null and void within their state's borders, and vowed secession should the federal government intervene. Jackson exploded, made his own military preparations, and issued a stinging proclamation in December 1832 that eviscerated the nullification idea as treasonous. Three months later, having failed to rouse sufficient support from their slave-holding neighbors, the nullifiers backed down. Their defeat forever ended Calhoun's dreams of becoming president, while vindicating Jacksonian democratic nationalist convictions that, three decades later, greatly fortified Abraham Lincoln during the secession winter of 1860-61.

Burstein cannot help but acknowledge that Jackson acted in this crisis "out of devotion to a principle that was larger than any man"—the principle that the United States was an inviolable nation and a bastion of popular government. Yet, having said so little about Jackson's ideas, Burstein leaves the details of Jackson's political and constitutional thinking, and how he came to acquire it, singularly vague. Instead he emphasizes Jackson's personal confrontation with Calhoun, a man whom Jackson had come to loathe as a dishonorable backstabber. Once again we are on the dueling ground, with the vehement Jackson giving his foe no quarter, in a personal war for mastery that could only end in Calhoun's political destruction. As for the democratic nationalism enunciated in Jackson's stirring proclamation—the greatest exercise in constitutional reasoning by any president from Jefferson to Lincoln—Burstein assigns the actual credit, beyond the crudest formulations, to Jackson's "favorite speechwriter," Secretary of State Edward Livingston, who, he asserts, was the document's actual author.

This account is badly skewed, factually and analytically. Although Jackson sought out others to write the nullification proclamation, as he did with all of his state papers (Livingston, this time around, was actually his second choice), Jackson participated fully at every step in its preparation, firing off long memos about his constitutional ideas, rejecting a draft by Livingston that he regarded as insufficiently forceful, and inserting chunks of his own rhetoric. Only when he was absolutely satisfied that the proclamation embodied his own thinking did Jackson permit its publication. This is how virtually every American president since Washington has operated. To deny Jackson's authorship is not simply unfair; it is to minimize the importance of Jackson's own ideas. But that, of course, is Burstein's aim, in keeping with his unremitting emphasis on passions over politics. Late in life Jackson did reportedly remark that his main regret in the nullification crisis was his failure to have ordered Calhoun executed for treason. But even this regret was political and not merely personal, and Burstein barely explains why.

Burstein is even worse on the Bank War. Under Nicholas Biddle, he writes confidently, "the Bank of the United States was perfectly well-managed." Thanks to Biddle's expertise, the Bank not only checked irresponsible state bankers, it "contribute[d] to the democratization of American society by extending credit to the yeomanry of the country." Jackson understood none of this. He could see the Bank only as a sinister force, a symbol of manipulation

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and elite conspiracy made all the more hateful because it had the backing of Clay, the "corrupt" bargainer and campaign traducer of his late wife. And so Jackson set out to destroy Biddle's bank utterly, just as he had destroyed Charles Dickinson and the Creek Indians and the British army at New Orleans. "His combined ignorance and excitement," Burstein writes, "led to a personal war against the bank's recharter and the removal of the federal deposits: 'Divorce the government from the banks,' as Jackson often put it." And by smashing the benevolent Bank to pieces, Burstein writes, Jackson paved the way for the Panic of 1837 and a four-year economic depression.

As anti-Jackson polemic, this is the match of anything spoken or written by Biddle's hired publicists, let alone the various great congressional orators, including Daniel Webster, whom Biddle also had on his payroll. As history, it is ludicrous. Biddle did a creative and credible job of restraining the state banks, but his autocratic management of the Bank was anything but perfect. Although required, by the Bank's charter, to govern with a board of directors, including some directors appointed by the White House, Biddle would have none of it, heeding no counsel but his own and running roughshod over any speck of opposition. ("We are perfect ciphers," wrote one Bank director, Henry D. Gilpin, who later defected to the Jacksonians.) When pressed, Biddle haughtily denied that he was accountable in any way either to the federal government or to the public whose money he held—only to his stockholders. In extending credit, Biddle was far less partial to the nation's yeomanry than he was to its established men of commerce and business, whose prosperity, he assumed, would eventually trickle down to less favored citizens. (He showed even more partiality to his political placemen, like Webster.) And when Jackson finally challenged his vast independent powers, Biddle's concern for the commonweal led him to inflict as much damage as he could on the economy in order to get his way.

Neither would one guess how and why a vast number of Americans, and not just Andrew Jackson, reasonably saw the Bank of the United States as an undemocratic enormity with potentially disastrous powers. That potential had been amply displayed in 1819, when, under management that combined incompetence with larceny, the Bank helped to unleash a speculative mania that led to the first great crash and depression in American history. Biddle was a much better banker—but his unreformed national bank, with its virtually total control over the nation's currency and credit, remained a menace. It was not Jackson, nor any of his followers, but the redoubtable capitalist Nathan Appleton who explained, in the Bank War's aftermath, that "a great central power, independent of the general or state governments, is an anomaly in our system. Such a power over the currency is the most tremendous which can be established. Without the assurance that it will be managed by men, free from the common imperfections of human nature, we are safer without it."

Nor, finally, would anyone guess from Burstein's book that an alternative set of economic ideas, and not just blind prejudice, informed the attack on the Bank. Those ideas, which Jackson endorsed and which were associated with the so-called Loco Foco radical democracy, held that specie was the only sound form of currency, and that the government's money ought not to be placed on deposit with an all-powerful chartered private institution. Following the Panic of 1837—which, *pace* Burstein, few historians now blame solely or even chiefly on Jackson's banking policies—those ideas became the basis for the creation of a new federal depository, called the Independent Treasury, in place of the deposed Bank of the United States. By modern standards, these hard-money ideas were crude in their analyses of commercial booms and busts—although it is perhaps worth noting that under the independent treasury system the United States enjoyed its most sustained period of economic prosperity in the entire nineteenth century. What is ridiculous is Burstein's contention that the Bank War was driven by nothing more elevated than the inflamed and ignorant passions of Andrew Jackson.

VI.

WHEN JACKSON LEFT OFFICE in 1837, and again at his death in 1845, his celebrators compared him to Washington and Jefferson. Burstein, as ever drawn more to culture than to politics, thinks of him more as a grand Shakespearean character. Such comparisons were also common among Jackson's bitterest enemies in the 1830s, who most often likened him to the scheming, insecure, homicidal Richard III. Burstein has a different conceit. Of all the characters in Shakespeare, he claims, Jackson most closely resembled Coriolanus, the tragic Roman consul "who resisted any law but his own and fought his enemies with moral fury." The comparison is absurd. As Burstein himself admits, the patrician Coriolanus's downfall was his detestation of the common people (and theirs of him) as well as of the arts of republican politics. "You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate/As reeks o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize/As the dead carcasses of unburied men/That do corrupt my air": Coriolanus's signature speech is the furthest thing from a precursor of Jacksonian democracy.

In his final chapter, Burstein charges that Jackson was a thoroughly meretricious man, neither a liberal nor a democrat but a demagogue, with no understanding of the common good. He had no concept of social justice, only a violent drive to re-affirm his own impulses and to justify his own life experience. His democracy was a sham, since it tolerated Indian removal, black enslavement, and the second-class citizenship of white women. Even Jackson's friendships were fraudulent, as he lacked any ability to compromise. A self-serving political alchemist, filled with extraordinary rage and an unquenchable taste for revenge, he had no respect for the rule of law, except for the laws he made himself. About the best that Burstein can say about Jackson, other than a grudging allowance that he tried to hold the nation together, is that his political foes Clay and Calhoun were not necessarily any better.

All of which raises a question: why is Andrew Burstein so outraged—so, well, impassioned? One reason seems to be that he is more of a moralist than a historian, someone who would rather imprison and then judge the past on the basis of his own fixed categories of righteousness than comprehend imperfection and contradiction. What appear to be the familiar academic leftist formulas that run throughout his judgments—Jackson was a slaveholder, Jackson was no feminist, Jackson killed Indians, therefore Jackson was no democrat—are actually less a mark of political commitment than of an abandonment of history in favor of a settled rectitude. Perhaps the only Americans of Jackson's time of whom Burstein might approve would be the radical Garrisonian abolitionists—moral absolutists who, for all their admirable courage and universalism and eventual impact on American politics, were constitutionally allergic to democracy. Yet the Garrisonians represented a tiny handful of the American people. If the rest of the citizenry put its political faith in such a depraved, backward-looking fraud as Burstein's Jackson, it is a wonder that anything ever changed for the better—and yet things did change for the better, in large measure

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as a consequence of the Jacksonian turn in American democracy.

NEAR THE END OF THE BOOK, Burstein lays bare his scorn in an astonishing and condescending paragraph that stunningly clarifies why his book says so little about politics. "Students of political history," he proclaims, "too often refashion the republic in rational terms, giving undue weight to grand prescriptions." This, he says, is a "highly ideological perspective and a gross misreading of the past," one that makes men like Jackson look as if they held tangible goals or authentic ideas that were worthy of respect: "the political pronouncements of this unlettered man were no more rooted in rational prescriptions for government than his adherence to the culture of the duel was a rational means to preserve 'honor.'" In short, there were no political ideas, no politics really in Jackson's America, at least among the unlettered. There were only cultural systems, theaters of power, public gestures, and various forms of stagecraft. And in the case of Andrew Jackson, there was only irrational appetite, resentment, and bombast, all channeled into a ferocious will to power.

Such an analysis is fully in line with the bargain-basement Nietzsche and Foucault, admixed with earnest American do-goodism, that still passes for "theory" in much of the American academy. It is also in line with the fashionable "pragmatist" dismissal of historical truth. These anti-Enlightenment, anti-rationalist vapors are so pervasive that Burstein may not even realize their presence in his work; but the stench is unmistakable. His book is not a prescription for a new and improved political history, let alone for a new and improved understanding of Andrew Jackson. It is a prescription for the abolition of political history, and for the folding away of its remnants into a retrospective branch of cultural anthropology. And it encourages a deeply reactionary and anti-democratic reading of American history.

In his assessment of the America that elected Jackson and heroized him, Burstein arrives at precisely the point where the left and the right have long converged in their supercilious contempt for ordinary Americans. Relying heavily on some of the more skeptical American impressions of Tocqueville and Michel Chevalier, and even more on the writings of the eccentric, industrious hack Frances Trollope, Burstein paints a dreary panorama of a Jacksonian America populated by coarse, money-grubbing dullards who were inspired only by the pursuit of lucre and flattery. No two Americans, Mrs. Trollope sniffed, ever carried on a conversation "without the word DOLLAR being pronounced between them," thereby displaying a unity of feeling and purpose "found nowhere else, except, perhaps, in an ants' nest." Burstein assents: the great American people (hah!), mindless as insects, wanted nothing more than to enrich themselves, impervious to the finer things—and forever open to manipulation by cunning political frauds who could mobilize their envy of anybody who had more than they did, who spoke better than they did, who thought they knew better than they did. "Their enemy," Burstein writes, "was whatever stood in the way of their living well—or, whatever they were convinced preyed on them, tyrantlike." And their avatar, as well as their master manipulator, was Andrew Jackson.

TO DENY THE IRRATIONAL AND demagogic strain in American democracy, and the people's capacity for collective stupidity, flies in the face of all experience. It was precisely out of a recognition of these possibilities that Jackson's beloved federal Constitution was framed as it was in 1787. But to equate the democracy that emerged thereafter with demagogy, to demean ordinary people's desires to improve their material lives as boorish, crass, and destructive of all intellection, to rely on the likes of Frances Trollope as a reliable commentator on the substance of Jacksonian America, is even more foolish. It is to descend into the eternal complaint of both the pseudo-aristocrat and the frustrated leftist, that the masses are dolts incapable of enlightened self-rule, in need of either heavy restraint by their wise and virtuous betters or the vanguard instruction by the self-appointed bearers of a new and better world.

Burstein's deeply depressing book reads a lot like the degraded reporting and commentary on the politics of our own day, bored by ideas, too zippy to linger over policy, obsessed with character and the assassination of it. The same qualities have turned up in popular as well as academic histories of American politics, above all in a spate of new books that have either demoted Jefferson and Jackson, elevated their conservative foes, or both. Conor Cruise O'Brien's harangue against Jefferson as the spiritual forerunner of Pol Pot and Timothy McVeigh is the most outrageous of these books, but there have been many more, including David McCullough's valentine to John Adams, Joseph Ellis's more refined castigation of the "sphinx"-like Jefferson, and Richard Brookhiser's paean to Alexander Hamilton. (It was not surprising to see Brookhiser praise Burstein's book in *The New York Times* as a "challenging case study of the democratic system.")

Although written in various styles and from different perspectives, these books share a great deal: a preoccupation with personality and the private life, a tendency to draw strained conclusions from personal correspondence, a regurgitation of ancient sex scandals, and an impatience with the contradictions and manipulations that are the mark of most successful political leaders. Leftist and liberal social historians have sometimes been fairly accused of going overboard in their sentimental affection for history's downtrodden losers at the expense of its winners. But these books offer something else: a literature, not lacking in its own sentimentalism, on behalf of the conservative, anti-democratic losers of early American politics, at the expense of the democratic winners.

It would be much too simple to ascribe this losers' literature to some conservative, anti-democratic revival in historical writing. No doubt most of these authors (except for the amateur Brookhiser) would never describe themselves as conservative or anti-democratic. What it can be ascribed to, however, is a hostility to politics and a systematic effort to elevate certain character traits of which a particular author approves into the main standard, or even the sole standard, on which to judge political leaders. It was not always so: Henry Adams showed that it once was possible to write history critical of democracy that, if debatable and at times tendentious, was at least rooted in the political thoughts and deeds of his subjects. Now, though, for the conservative apologists and the besmirchers of democracy, the so-called "character issue" has become all, much as it was at the dawn of democratic politics—and much as it has become for the Washington press corps, with its weakness for reducing politics to cheap gossip and therapeutic cliché. All this interest in character sorely lacks character. But the character-mongers, the connoisseurs of the interior and the unknowable, the remorseless hounds of psycho-pathology, are everywhere, and they are gaining ground, among historians and journalists and pundits. Andrew Burstein's hatchet job on Andrew Jackson is the latest evidence of their ascendancy. And the big losers are Americans who seek and deserve a sound and complicated understanding of American politics. ■

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Richard Howard
That Cruel Guest

IN THE LAND OF PAIN
By Alphonse Daudet
Edited and translated
by Julian Barnes
(Alfred A. Knopf, 87 pp, $13)

THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT in American high schools has always been something of a curricular curiosity, and the abolition nowadays of the hopeful competence that it once proposed is but another sign of the withering away of the state of literary studies. Even so, up until the end of World War II (now, when, my graduate students ask, would that have been?), the text inveterately proposed on which to teethe for linguistic mastery, if the required language happened to be French, was Alphonse Daudet's *Lettres de mon moulin.* Even in France these good-natured vignettes were a perennial *lycée* favorite, the author having evinced an exemplary perfection in the vexed matter of sequence of tenses, henceforth something of a Daudet specialty. (After 1945, the already much-diminished French requirement probably shifted to Camus's *L'Étranger*; and at present I cannot even conceive of a plausible choice—perhaps Monique Wittig's *L'Opoponax,* a novel in the voice and the vocabulary of a five-year-old girl.) Daudet's letters from his windmill, a set of colorful family snapshots, were written just before the Franco-Prussian War (don't ask), and, like their coeval *Silas Marner,* they were deemed suitable for American adolescents—no sex, no sordor, just vivaciously recounted peasant capers in closely observed, though, as Zola pointed out, scandalously idealized Provençal landscapes. Daudet's realist phase would come later.

This folkish note, farcically sustained in the manner of Dickens, was sounded again in *Tartarin de Tarascon,* in the sequel *Tartarin sur les Alpes,* and even in a "further adventures" of Tartarin, *Port Tarascon,* eventually translated—for the money, he claimed—by Henry James, who had first met Daudet in the 1870s. "Yes, I have seen Daudet several times," he wrote. "He is a little fellow (very little) with a refined and picturesque head, of a Jewish type." Regardless of type, the acquaintance was pursued (how his elder son Léon Daudet, a founder of the Action Française, would have writhed at the racial slur), and James was to become something of a family friend (though he never liked that particular son), entertaining the Daudets in London, when the "great little novelist," as James had called him in *The Atlantic Monthly,* let him glimpse the *inédit* annotations on the progress of his disease.

Madame Daudet herself was not to know that it was tertiary syphilis that was killing her husband, though one wonders what she suspected on the many occasions she gave him the assuaging morphine injections that enabled Daudet to produce these disjunct texts, which were published in France only in 1931. In 1889, when Daudet was forty-nine and had eight more years of torment to endure, Henry James reported to William on "Daudet's own queer, deplorable condition which he intensely converts into art, success, copy, etc.—taking professional notes about his constant suffering (terrible in degree) which is to make a book called *La Douleur,* the most detailed and pessimistic notation of pain *qui fût jamais.*"

But I am losing my sequence of tenses. The initial successes of what James called Daudet's "high-colored little Provençal *faconde*—like the waving of some spotted bright handkerchief," along with the coquettishly autobiographical tale *Le petit chose,* the *David Copperfield* of France, must have worked some slick magic on what are always known as young people of all ages, and in all languages, for I inherited from my grandfather Isaac (no reader of French) the "Works of Alphonse Daudet," twenty turquoise shagreen tomes, supplemented by six identically bound memorial volumes by the author's brother, by his wife, and by his two sons (two volumes each). Evidently my grandfather, who also possessed a refined and picturesque head, of a Jewish type, was a bookish gent who liked to move among fine bindings.

If the renown of Alphonse Daudet had trickled down or bubbled up in Cleveland Heights to this extent—namely a turquoise shagreen shelf about half as long as the crimson morocco set of "Masterpieces of George Sand"—there must have been something doing which no longer does. Who has read a book by Alphonse Daudet? Well, I have. Indeed, I have read most of them (in French, I admit, not in the awful English of my grandfather's splendid set, in which James's translation did not figure and which I sold as soon as I came into that part of my inheritance), and I must approach the plausibly dismissive overtone of my question with some finesse, for my preening answer should afford reasons, or at least inducements, to read not only *In the Land of Pain,* which is not "a book by Alphonse Daudet" at all, but also other, ulterior works by Daudet. After you, Alphonse.

THE PRODIGY OF PROVENCE arrived in Paris in 1857 brimming with journalistic schemes and boulevard plays (which came to much the same thing). Of the plays, only *L'Arlésienne*—based on material from those windmill letters—survives, owing to the incidental music that Bizet wrote for it, though many of Daudet's nine subsequent novels which had left Provence so far behind were dramatized, or better say "staged," in the flashy manner of the period. The journalism—fugitive and acidulous—and the first of the Paris novels, *Froment jeune et Risler aîné,* gained Daudet membership in that ardent group of "realists" who met regularly to talk about literature: Flaubert, Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt, and Zola; and from that association his fate was determined. For, as Henry James was to say in a moment of exasperation with "realism" as it was so insistently rehearsed at the Magny dinners, "ignorance of everything but his little professional Paris horizon kept Daudet from the greater imagination, the imagination of the moralist." James is generous even here, however, adding that "Daudet was really more personal, more individual and more inimitable than anyone. None of the various descendants of Balzac who were to find in any degree the fortune that, under Balzac's great impulse, they often went so far to seek, has even perhaps equally arrived at that special success which consists in having drawn from one's talent, from one's whole organization and every attendant circumstance, every drop one was capable of giving."

James holds up for special admiration—this was how I came upon this book and immediately resolved to translate it: wait and see!—the singular "comic novel with a fine tragic movement" *Les Rois en Exil* or *Kings in Exile* (1879), in which several dispossessed

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monarchs take up residence in the French capital, some waiting and plotting for a restoration and chafing under their disgrace, others indifferent, resigned, relieved, eager to console themselves with the pleasures of Paris. And I should even exceed James's "warm immortality of condonation" by recommending one further, very late novel before coming down to *La Doulu,* or what Julian Barnes calls *In the Land of Pain*; this is *L'Immortel,* or *The Immortal* (1888), Daudet's *"Académie-Française* novel," harsh, bitter, and pervasively grim, without a single character whose virtues are admirable or who could represent simple decency or even command the reader's pity. The book, really a pamphlet-fiction summing up the complaints of three generations of novelists, Balzac to Goncourt, who were disdained by the Notables of Letters, was upon publication saluted as a deliciously wicked scandal sheet that provided the season's favorite salon sport: attaching the presumed real names to its fictional characters. But *L'Immortel* transcends such entertainments, for its nugatory plot turns on the antithesis between a prototypical academician and an authentic artist; if there is a lot of Mary McCarthy in it, there is even more of Dostoevsky, and the three great chapters—the fifth, which describes the gala dinner of an Academy salon; the eighth, recounting the funeral of the Academy's Perpetual Secretary; and the last, articulating the suicide of the eponymous "hero" (the ironic send-up of the book's title)—articulate uniquely, among all Daudet's fictions, what it means to call the characters *possessed.*

IN HIS EFFICIENT INTRODUCTION to *La Doulu,* Julian Barnes remarks on certain disparities in these notes Daudet began to take in the last ten years of his life, when the syphilis that he had contracted at seventeen, soon after his arrival in Paris, and which had gone into remission for so long, re-surfaced in its tertiary (and mortal) form: "The manuscript is currently untraceable, having apparently been dispersed after Lucien Daudet's death in 1946. The text was certainly edited before first publication [in French]; how much was cut or rearranged is impossible to guess." To his literary friends, and even to his literary sons (but not to his literary wife, though everyone in the family, even Madame Daudet's father, was called upon to administer the frequent doses of morphine and chloral that enabled Alphonse to write, if not to walk), Daudet often spoke of accumulating these materials for an eventual book, perhaps even a novel. As my earlier quotation reveals, Henry James himself, whom we might think of as averse to such intimacies, was invited to inspect the vivid fragments and was aware of Daudet's heroic sacrifice to literary consciousness; in fact James regarded what he saw of *La Doulu* as part of the Flaubertian pathology of turning everything into art, at all costs.

Daudet apparently stopped recording what was happening to him about three years before he died; which interval, like that in Baudelaire's life and in Maupassant's, belongs to the inconceivable martyrology of syphilis, entirely off the literary record. Barnes points out that the fifty-some pages of clear-headed, often comical notes that here distill a decade of acute suffering are chiefly remarkable for their rare capacity, exactly suited to their fragmentary form, to set down what life—life!—feels like; in other words, to write pain. Curiously, the agonized and agonizing record, chopped and checked as we have it, suggests the best novel that Daudet never wrote, though he alluded to such a project not only to James but to Parisian literary journalists not long before his death: a postmodern novel in which the conflict is reduced, as in those late Beckett texts and plays "for nothing," to the arena of the confiscated self, the valor of clenched teeth: "suffering is nothing," as he once murmured, "it's all a matter of preventing those you love from suffering."

For the transcribing sufferer, pain is always new, fresh, inventive, creative; while for those around him—not cool-handed attendants protected by professional indifference but the very family the man's entire oeuvre was committed to cherishing—his unspecified illness is merely repetitive, banal, boring, sterile. Hence the dramatic paradox in all of *La Doulu,* the sense that what is imperceptible to others is drastically alive and writhing inside. Daudet repeatedly rehearses the horrors of the encased man:

> I feel like some creature from mythology, whose torso is locked in a box of wood or stone, gradually turning numb and then solid. As the paralysis spreads upwards, the sick man changes into a tree or a rock, like some nymph from Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* . . . Darkness is gathering me into its arms. Farewell wife, children, family, the things of my heart. . . . Farewell me, cherished me, now so hazy, so indistinct. . . . In bed. Dysentery. Two injections of morphine a day. No longer able to get out of the habit. My stomach has adapted itself a little: with five or six drops I no longer vomit, although I can't eat. Forced to continue taking chloral. If I've taken morphine beforehand, I sleep very well. But if I have an injection during the night, after the chloral, then my sleep is interrupted and there's no chance anymore for the rest of the night. Restlessness, all my thoughts in turmoil, a frenetic succession of images, projects, themes—a magic lantern. The next day, my head is filled with smoke. I get the shivers. Each injection stops the pain for three or four hours. Then come "the wasps," the stinging and stabbing here, there, and everywhere—followed by the Pain, that cruel guest.

Certainly it is fascinating to speculate, in the light or darkness of such fragments, on the work that would have taken its place among the great imagined (and imaginary) summative conceptions of the nineteenth century, from Mallarmé's delusional *Livre* to Eilert Lovborg's "Book of the Future" that Hedda Gabler consigned to the flames.

IN HIS BUSINESSLIKE WAY (AFTER all, the editor and translator of even this posthumous work is but one more professional), Barnes adumbrates this ultimate project, but he is too dismissive of the kind of writer Daudet is nowadays perceived to be—"hard-working, popular, whose fame and relevance are largely used up in his own lifetime"—to attribute more than a skillful transcription of pain, terror and even despair to the "vendor of happiness," as Daudet liked to call himself at the end.

Barnes's translation of this unsuspected text of Daudet's—"the first ever," the publisher's promotion exclaims—is crisp, but I find his account of its author to be ultimately inadequate and certainly uncharitable, with comments such as "the twenty-volume collected edition . . . seemed to have said (more than) it all." I believe that "the fame and relevance" of any writer—even one as clever and seasoned as the author of *Flaubert's Parrot,* even Flaubert, God help us—will always be "largely used up" unless readers attend to his works with some exploratory sense that the past is not inferior to the present just because we are alive and the past is dead; unless we grant the unexamined books of a bygone author what Blake called the equivalent of prayer—the charity of unmixed attention.

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THIS WAS TO BE MY LITTLE peroration, what the French would call a *prière pour le bon usage d'Alphonse Daudet,* but then I made a last-minute visit to my university's library, in order to ascertain which chapters of *The Immortal* were the good ones, or at least the best bad ones, to recommend to readers innocent of Daudet's production. I was feeling rather huffy about Barnes's clever identification of *In the Land of Pain* as an item of (acceptable) modernist textuality over Daudet's old-fashioned yarns (so much voice-writing, as it were). So conceive my amazement when, mooning along the still-unravished shelves of Daudet *père et fils (et frère et femme)* in French and in English, I discovered—it turns out that my discovery may be repeated in all the major libraries of New York City: hardly a maverick *trouvaille*—a little gold-backed volume called *Suffering (1887–1895)* by Alphonse Daudet, published by Yale University Press in 1934—three years after the French edition—translated by one Milton Garver "at the request of Madame Alphonse Daudet who is still living in the same apartment where she spent many happy years with her illustrious husband."

This first translation of the work is a little less zippy, a little more smoothed out than Barnes's very contemporary-sounding version. There are places where Garver seems more concerned to make Daudet's meaning clear. (Garver: "Let us try and make the doctor beloved instead of assigning him the role of a brutal and hard butcher." Barnes: "Let's make people love the doctor, rather than play the tough and brutal butcher.") But certainly the Barnes version is sharper throughout and more spontaneous. (Garver: "The mind becomes accustomed to this sinister state." Barnes: "The mind adjusts to this appalling condition.") Garver follows his translation by some pages of bibliographical detail regarding Daudet's plans for publication of the possibly more extensive text, of which he prints the same torso that appears in Barnes's version. He also includes a handsome though ravaged-looking photograph of Daudet and what he calls "the beautiful article of Marcel Proust, published in *La Presse,* August 11, 1897." Proust's article (one of several he devoted to Daudet, though he wrote even more rapturously of Lucien, the younger son) is a four-page meditation on the great man's countenance, "this work of art which is M. Daudet," and it is followed by a fifteen-page "appreciation of Alphonse Daudet by André Ebner, the last secretary of the author."

Barnes cites Ebner several times, but I did not realize that he was the amanuensis-*en-titre,* having inherited the position from his own father, who served as Daudet's secretary for fifteen years after the Franco-Prussian War. André Ebner appropriately concludes his 1930 tribute (Daudet had been dead for thirty-three years) and the entire little volume of the first translation of *La Doulu* thus:

> I seem to see his delicate pale face with half-closed eyes, opposite me at the table, during those joyful hours when I wrote at his dictation, and when in moments of discouragement I try to draw up a balance of the happy moments of my life, I put in the first rank that of having known Alphonse Daudet and of having received the noble lesson of his life as an example. And at once my complainings cease.

It is naughty of Knopf to claim a "first-ever" translation that has actually been preceded by a handsome and valuable English edition—from a university press, no less!—of the same work some seventy-nine years ago. Barnes, who is not quite the pioneer here, has nonetheless afforded us a literary gem, and I am happy to recommend to readers of our incomparable modernity the efforts of everyone concerned with presenting once again this beautiful and awful little book. Especially the efforts of Alphonse Daudet. ■

Erin Leib

Earthquakes

EVIL IN MODERN THOUGHT: AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY
By Susan Neiman
(Princeton University Press, 343 pp., $29.95)

IT IS NOT A GOOD THING FOR philosophy to find it everywhere. Most of experience, and even most of thought, is decidedly not philosophical—which is precisely what makes philosophizing so valuable. Yet Susan Neiman's book errs in just this way. It treats a phenomenon that is, unfortunately, ubiquitous; but it then falls into the trap of believing that serious reflection on this phenomenon is similarly ubiquitous. As a result, Neiman's interesting book winds up making philosophy out of non-philosophy. In its insistence upon a theory of everything, it becomes a theory of nothing.

This is truly unfortunate, because Neiman takes up a most urgent subject. In the face of the abounding ugliness of our times, she urges us to wrestle with what evil means and with whether we might be reconciled to it as part of our worldview. She recognizes that the ancient philosophical inquiry into the justification of evil—the tradition known as theodicy—and the use of God language in general cannot be the only response to evil in an increasingly irreverent and disenchanted world. To that end, she charts the course of a more secular and philosophically sophisticated theodicy from Leibniz through Rawls. Indeed, she ambitiously tries to show that not just some modern philosophy, but all modern philosophy, is in essence a reckoning with evil. "One of the book's central claims," she writes, is to prove that "the problem of evil is the guiding force of modern thought." But this all-encompassing claim wildly overreaches; and so, while Neiman does perform a service by helping us to think about how to think about evil as moderns, she fails to help us think convincingly about the history of philosophy. Her "alternative history" ultimately falls short because it is born of a highly idiosyncratic construction of philosophy itself. She simply tries too hard.

Neiman positions her analysis of the question of evil between two devastating moments: the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and Auschwitz. She argues that these two catastrophes were watersheds in intellectual history that transformed the way people perceive evil, not so much because of the uniqueness of their evil, but because of their timing. Neiman contends that both events struck at moments of extraordinary intellectual ferment, when Western confidence in understanding the world was ripe, and, consequently, most vulnerable to the shocks of history.

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THE FIRST PILLAR OF NEIMAN'S two-pronged thesis is that Lisbon re-oriented thinking about evil by inaugurating the distinction between "natural evil" and "moral evil." It would be foolish to think that such periodizations of thought can really be accurate—ruptures of the public mind do not, after all, appear that crisply—but the general claim is worthy of consideration. Neiman argues that the earthquake that struck this most powerful and cosmopolitan of eighteenth-century European cities, killing at least sixty thousand people and destroying tremendous amounts of property, also shook the foundations of rationality itself. The historical period leading up to the Lisbon tragedy was marked by an increasing belief in the rational transparency of the world. Natural sciences had combined to confirm the Enlightenment conviction that the universe is, as a whole, intelligible; and changes in the social order, away from feudalism and toward egalitarianism, increased confidence in the idea that effort is met by reward. But the great earthquake, with its randomness and undiscerning devastation, shattered this emerging hope in the rationality of the world. It called into question all of the newfound stability, all of the faith in earthly order.

The initial explanations of the destruction indicated the magnitude of the mental rupture. The Marques de Pombal, the prime minister of Portugal at the time, insisted that there was no explanation to be had; there were only means of coping. Asked what could be done about the earthquake, he replied: "Bury the dead and feed the living." He accordingly set out to reconstruct the destroyed society, avoiding the spread of disease and re-building what was left of people's lives. Yet there were also those who strongly believed that an explanation could be given: that the earthquake was God's wrath made manifest, and hence sinners were to blame for it. One highly visible and insistent proponent of this view was an Italian Jesuit priest named Gabriel Malagrida, who widely preached the guilt of the Portuguese. In 1758, he was executed. Neiman makes much use of this public injunction, pitting it against Pombal's pragmatism. "Pombal's victory was a victory for the view that God's purposes have no public function," she writes. Malagrida's vindictive interpretation of evil had to be put to death. The transparency of the world had been lost. God's order was deemed inscrutable, and practical action was hailed as superior to speculation.

Here, in the ruins of a natural disaster, the distinction between natural evil, brought about through the hands of nature, and moral evil, brought about by the hands of man, was born, in Neiman's account. The distinction indicated a shift away from the attribution of cosmic meaning to nature's whims. Their horror surely did not disappear, but their significance as statements about the nature of the world did. "Since Lisbon," she writes, "natural evils no longer have any seemly relation to moral evils; hence they no longer have meaning at all. Natural disaster is the object of attempts at prediction and control, not of interpretation." The sphere of meaningful evil shrank through its naturalization. No longer would a philosopher ask "Why did this occur?," but only "What can be done in the face of it?" "Why?" could now only reasonably be asked about humanly induced evil, because only that sphere remained accessible to human understanding. It was this new awareness of the distinction between nature and morality that marked the beginning of modernity, according to Neiman, or at least the modern shape of the problem of evil.

In giving so much weight to the debate between Pombal and Malagrida—indeed, in characterizing it as a debate at all—Neiman already forces philosophy upon the unphilosophical. For Pombal was an official creating policy, not a thinker delineating the boundaries between natural and moral evil. He was acting as a prime minister and responding to a crisis. He was most definitely not articulating an intellectual response to the problem of evil. Yet Neiman wants to see in him a well-reasoned philosopher, and she builds the rest of her intellectual edifice on top of this rather shaky foundation.

THE SECOND PILLAR OF NEIMAN'S argument centers on Auschwitz. She argues that just as Lisbon undermined the conceptual framework dominant in Europe at the time, Auschwitz undermined the conceptual framework of its own time. The success of Nazism between 1933 and 1945 brought all prior speculations on moral evil into question. For in the face of six million corpses, could evil really be part of a progressive history, as Hegel had suggested? Or was it just our own construction, as Nietzsche urged? It certainly could not be part of the best of all possible worlds, as Leibniz had famously claimed centuries before. "Twentieth-century events made systematic explanations of the whole seem not only impossible," Neiman writes, "but finally and decidedly wrong."

Why the philosophical shift? After Lisbon, when moral evil became the only kind of evil worth speculating about, evil came to be defined as a product of the will, a result of bad intention. But then came the Nazis. The factories of death, run by thousands of ordinary citizens, compromised the modern obsession with intention, because an unthinking conformity seemed more responsible for Nazi crimes than a thoughtful intention. The hero of Neiman's book is clearly Hannah Arendt and her notorious notion of the banality of evil. In a pure Arendtian spirit, Neiman observes that "at every level, the Nazis produced more evil, with less malice, than civilization had previously known." The result was a shake-up as powerful as the Lisbon earthquake:

> The problem of evil began by trying to penetrate God's intentions. Now it appears we cannot make sense of our own. If Auschwitz leaves us more helpless than Lisbon, it is because our conceptual resources seem exhausted. . . .
>
> We should admit the extent of our losses. If Lisbon marked the moment of recognition that traditional theodicy was hopeless, Auschwitz signaled the recognition that every replacement fared no better.

The face of evil shown in Auschwitz is inarguably devastating. But Neiman's analysis of it is eminently contestable. She seeks to periodize an uncontainable subject into neat parts, and in so doing she draws conclusions that are too broad and consequently too flimsy. Neiman's unmitigated adoration for Arendt is unfortunate. She fails to make a case for the new era of banal evil, to persuade us by means of argument that Arendt's characterization of Adolf Eichmann was correct and worthy of dislodging alternative understandings of his behavior. (There have been many important studies of the motivations of the Nazi perpetrators since Arendt wrote her report of the Eichmann trial, and they do not all bear out her speculation about the thoughtlessness of human evil.) Moreover, Eichmann's careerism hardly precludes the possibility of accompanying malice, since acting by rote does not itself negate a deep-seated motivation rooted in a perverse picture of the world.

Neiman's enthusiasm for the Arendtian concept also leads her to make silly claims about what we once did know about evil and now no longer do. She writes that "Auschwitz embodied evil that confuted

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two centuries of modern assumptions about intention." Before Auschwitz, in her telling, we seem to have known that intentions alone constitute evil, and we found some comfort in that explanation. We knew that human-inflicted horror rests solely on conscious human choice, and we felt that we had satisfactorily taken care of the question of the origins of evil. But surely such an account is not true. There was never a consensus—not even among philosophers—about the nature of evil. There has always been a so-called deontological strain of moral philosophy that gives primacy to intention in determining the value of human action alongside a consequentialist strain that looks at behavior alone. Utilitarians, who emphasize actions above all in the moral calculation, have always counter-balanced the pure Kantians and their universe of transparent intentions. It is no wonder that Bentham, the father of utilitarianism, does not make it into Neiman's canon of theodicizers. His pragmatic approach to morality mirrored the Pombal-esque approach to nature, and so does not fit Neiman's tidy narrative of philosophical thinking before and after Auschwitz.

The narrative falters in other ways as well. Neiman breaks down her list of post-Lisbon philosophers on evil into two groups: those who claimed that appearances of disorder in the world are not final because heaven or history will have the last word, and those who claimed that appearances are exactly as they seem, thereby rendering the world inexplicably chaotic or downright cruel. In the first group she places Leibniz, Pope, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Marx; in the second, Bayle, Voltaire, Hume, Sade, and Schopenhauer. It must be noted that for all the emphasis on Lisbon as the breaking point, not all the philosophers on Neiman's list actually published after 1755. Leibniz died in 1716, Pope died in 1744, and Bayle's major work on theodicy came out in 1697. So much for the earthquake that shook all thinking. (The peculiar nature of Neiman's philosophical canon can also be seen in her long expositions on figures such as Pope and Sade. Pope was certainly an influential spokesman for Enlightenment optimism, but he was hardly a serious philosophical thinker. Sometimes Neiman cannot distinguish between intellectual significance and cultural significance.)

In the section of her book dedicated to post-Holocaust thinkers, Neiman examines Camus, Arendt, Adorno, and Rawls. John Rawls, a thinker about evil? Neiman turns him into one by suggesting that his work on justice is really a kind of theodicy insofar as it is a mode of negotiating with the injustice around us. She quotes him: "I believe that the very possibility of such social order can itself reconcile us to the social world. . . . This alone, quite apart from our success or failure, suffices to banish the dangers of resignation and cynicism." Her gloss is indicative of her method as a whole: "The fact that this engagement was increasingly unavoidable almost in spite of personal inclinations suggests something about the problem of evil itself." Recognizing that Rawls himself would resist her characterization of him—he was deeply opposed to metaphysics, as a matter of philosophical principle—Neiman nevertheless insists on the centrality of evil to his theory of justice simply because it addresses issues of human contingency and reconciliation with the world. But theodicy is something much more specific, and much more difficult, than that.

If theodicy is everywhere, then it is nowhere. And if everyone is a philosopher of evil, then no one is. Pombal was a prime minister and Rawls was a political theorist, and it takes a large amount of fudging to turn them into metaphysicians. Neiman's book does open up room for philosophical reflection upon the subject, and so she has made a thought-provoking contribution. But how useful are her categories, really, in assisting us in the comprehension of our own evil-soaked time? Her brief section on the evil of September 11 attests to the inadequacy of her package. She argues that the destruction of the World Trade Center was not representative of the new era of evil that Auschwitz ostensibly ushered in, for the planning and the precision of the attack displayed much thought and a heavy load of malice, and hence cannot be placed in the Arendtian category of thoughtless evil. In fact, these horrors were "old-fashioned," "awesomely intentional" events. It is too bad that Neiman does not see what is before her eyes, as her own observations about September 11 show that intentional evil can live alongside unintentional evil, and we can recognize the difference between them and also attribute guilt to both. We are not living in a new era of banal evil after all. And so the framework for analysis built entirely around the catastrophes at Lisbon and Auschwitz must yield a little to the harsh complications of the real. A country at war had better be aware that evil is a messy business—the thinking about it as much as the fighting against it. Among the many things that are about to be tested are our categories. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

Continued from page 5

woman's health, and even if the legislation adds unnecessary risks.

Finally, Rosen's idea that it would be good for pro-choice Americans to subject to majority control the right of individual women to control their own bodies, to terminate their pregnancies, and to choose the safest procedure modern medicine has to offer at best reveals naïveté about the power of those who believe women should be forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term; and it reveals ignorance about the burden of pregnancy and childbirth. The fact is, whether it is twelve states that would ban abortions immediately upon reversal of *Roe* or "only" a few, as Rosen predicts, these bans would force thousands of individual women to carry unwanted pregnancies to term or to obtain illegal procedures at risk to life and health. Working to protect the rights of women to preserve the integrity of their bodies is not "extreme," as Rosen would have it; it is what the American tradition of liberty and self-determination is all about.

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JEFFREY ROSEN REPLIES:

Like the interest groups they represent, Kate Michelman and Priscilla J. Smith continue to conflate restrictions on late-term abortions, which most Americans support, with bans on early-term abortions, which most Americans oppose. I argued that Congress, the state legislatures, and the courts should not make the same error, and nothing in their letters calls this conclusion into question. Both of them, however, incorrectly characterize Justice Kennedy's dissent in the *Stenberg* case, where he reaffirmed his belief that, before viability, a state may deny "no woman the right to choose an abortion" and, after viability, it may place "no undue burden upon the right." For better or for worse, *Roe* won't be overturned any time soon. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Ego and The Yid

A FEW YEARS AGO, EDWARD Said was invited to give a lecture at the Freud Society in Vienna, at Berggasse 19 no less, on the subject of "Freud and the Non-European." Then he chose to enact his vocation as an intellectual by gayly throwing a rock at an Israeli guardhouse across the Lebanese border, and the Freud Society withdrew its invitation. "Freud was hounded out of Vienna because he was a Jew," Said explained to *The New York Times*. "Now I'm hounded out because I'm a Palestinian." It was one of the more extreme expressions of Said's compassion for himself. It put me in mind of an autobiographical lecture that he delivered at the New York Public Library in 1998, in which he preceded his recollections of his many ordeals ("When I graduated [boarding school in Massachusetts], the rank of valedictorian or salutatorian was withheld from me") with an account of the shipwrecked sailor in Conrad's story "Amy Foster," one of the most truly unfortunate figures in all of literature. Anyway, having discovered what it feels like to be a Jew on the run, Said eventually delivered his lecture at the Freud Museum of London. It has now appeared as a book, and its aim is the correction, and in a way the annulment, of Jewish identity.

SAID ADMIRES FREUD FOR TWO REASONS. The first reason is that "Freud mobilized the non-European past in order to undermine any doctrinal attempt that might be made to put Jewish identity on a sound foundational basis, whether religious or secular." This dissolution of Jewish identity Freud is alleged to have accomplished in *Moses and Monotheism*, the late work in which he proposed, as Said put it, that "the founder of Jewish identity was himself a non-European Egyptian," and that "Judaism begins in the realm of Egyptian, non-Jewish monotheism." In this way Freud "undercuts Judaic originality" and "restores to their place components of the origin of Judaism that had been forgotten or denied." The second reason is that Freud displayed an admirable alienation from his own people, and exemplified "the diasporic, wandering, unresolved, cosmopolitan consciousness of someone who is both inside and outside his or her community." Said concludes his book with a paean to "the non-Jewish Jew," Isaac Deutscher's ancient slogan of Jewish self-erasure.

ALL THIS IS INTELLECTUAL VIOLENCE, and nothing else. It is an assault upon the Jewish Jew, an exercise in the coercive figuration of the other that Said has made a career out of piously lamenting. I have seen nothing like it since Arthur Koestler's ridiculous attempt to relieve himself of his Jewishness by insisting upon its Khazar origins. But Koestler's coarse notion of the historical inauthenticity of the Jews had at least a certain spiritual authenticity: He was not the only Jew in modernity who was keen to be rid of the weight. Said, by contrast, is here to tell us who we really are. And his ignorance is as perfect as his temerity. He seems to know nothing about anything Jewish. He relies heavily upon Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's remarkable book *Freud's Moses*, which appeared in 1991, though he amusingly refers to its author as "Josef" instead of "Yosef." "Josef" has a fine exilic ring, whereas "Yosef" is so Hebrew, so housed. Said grossly simplifies Yerushalmi's account of Freud's attitude to Zionism, which was much more favorable than Said's hating mind can allow. Freud's withering rationalism did not at all wither his solidarity with his people. Yet the really risible thing about Said's construction is that it is based entirely on a fiction. Freud conceived of his work as "*ein historischer Roman*," a historical novel. There is no basis in Biblical scholarship or in historical scholarship for his notion that Moses was an Egyptian, or that he was murdered by the Israelites in the desert (that was the particular hallucination of a German writer named Ernst Sellin), or that Judaism was guiltily established as a "return of the repressed," and so on. Said remarks that "so much of the material [Freud] is dealing with as he chronicles the aftermath of Moses' legacy is uneven," but it is really quite even. It is evenly spurious. Freud's discussion in *Moses and Monotheism* is nothing like a "demonstration," as Said calls it. Freud himself concedes in his book—Said does not cite these passages—that "[o]bjective evidence . . . has not been obtainable," and that he is "accepting what seems to us serviceable in the material presented to us and rejecting what does not suit us," and that "I use Biblical tradition here in such an autocratic and arbitrary way." Freud is not restoring anything. He is inventing everything. And Said has a political use for his inventions.

JEWS ARE NOT EUROPEANS AND THEY ARE not non-Europeans. They are Jews, an autonomous people with an autonomous history that has directed them, in different times and in different places, against their will and according to their will, toward certain peoples and away from certain peoples. The autonomy of the Jews, moreover, is not the same thing as the exclusivity of the Jews. The idea that Jewish religion and Jewish culture was influenced by non-Jewish religions and non-Jewish cultures is not exactly a bolt of revisionist lightning. Jewish sameness is riddled with otherness. In the Jewish tradition, it was Abraham, and not Moses, who discovered monotheism, and Abraham was famously a Chaldean, a man who came from across the river and was therefore an *ivri*, a crosser, a Hebrew. The impact of the religious practices of the Egyptians upon the religious practices of the Israelites was meticulously analyzed by Maimonides in the twelfth century. So the story of the Jewish understanding of Jewish hybridity is rich and long, and it is in no way ruinous of Jewish identity. What matters, after all, is what a culture does with its heterogeneous materials. Provenance is not the measure of substance. Said assails Yerushalmi for "impl[ying] that it was the genius of Judaism to have elaborated the religion well beyond anything the Egyptians knew about," but that is precisely the point. Origins have almost nothing to do with originality.

AND IF THE NON-JEWISH JEW, THEN WHY not the non-Palestinian Palestinian? Surely the blessing of cosmopolitanism, of all blessings, must be a universal one. If the Jews have been raised up by the spiritual blandishments of statelessness, then the Palestinians, too, should aspire to them. But Said likes it both ways. He enjoys the glamour of diasporism and the rectitude of nationalism. The only interesting disclosure in this insulting little volume is that its author opposes any partition of the disputed land and supports the establishment of "a bi-national state in which Israel and Palestine are parts." He knows, of course, that a bi-national state is a method of abolishing the Jewish state by demographic means. But if the Jews come to feel homeless at home, well, homelessness is what they do best, and who are they to interfere with Edward Said's representation of them?

LEON WIESELTIER

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